County Hunter News

June 1, 2009
Volume 5, Issue 6

Welcome to the On-Line County Hunter News, a monthly publication for those interested in county hunting, with an orientation toward CW operation.

Contributions of articles, stories, letters, and pictures to the editor are welcomed, and may be included in future issues at the editor's discretion.

The County Hunter News will attempt to provide you with interesting, thought provoking articles, articles of county hunting history, or about county hunters or events, ham radio or electronics history, general ham radio interest, and provide news of upcoming operating events.

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County Hunter Nets run on 14.0565, 10.122.5, and **7056.5**, with activity nights on 3556.5 on Tuesday evenings around 8-9pm Eastern Time. Also, with low sunspot activity, most of the SSB activity now is on 'friendly net' 7188/7185 KHz. The cw folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.915.5, and 28.0565 when sunspots better). Look around 18135 or 18.132.5 for occasional 17M SSB runs.

You can see live spots of county hunter activity at ch.W6RK.com

For information on county hunting, check out the following resources:

The USACA award is sponsored by CQ Magazine. Rules and information are here: http://countyhunter.com/cq.htm

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out: http://countyhunter.com/whatis.htm

MARAC sponsors an award program for many other county hunting awards. You can find information on these awards and the rules at: http://countyhunter.com/marac_information_package.htm

The CW net procedure is written up at: http://www.wd3p.net/ch/netproc/netproc.htm

There is a lot more information at www.countyhunter.com . Back issues of the County Hunter News are available at www.CHNewsonline.com

De N4CD (email: telegraphy@verizon.net)

Notes from the Editor

N4CD Bob

1) **Mobile Activity in May 2009**

The sunspots are trying to appear – and propagation is sometimes nice on 20M, but still much of the same. We are going on a long time between sunspot cycles, but not record setting by any means. There isn't much to report on 17M, but 20/30/40 still provides lots of counties for those looking for them. It was a great month for QSO Parties, and with warmer weather more mobiles are venturing out and running. Gas has crept up a bit, but still a bargain at $2 to $2.25 or so a gallon. The newer cars are getting better mileage, too.

Jeff, W9MSE took a big trip for the MARAC contest. He wrote:

"I sure appreciate all those who followed along and gave me many contacts. I am still busy rewriting the logs to log sheets to send in, and have not even looked at the number of counties worked. All my logging is done by paper and pen, so lots of time needed to get them to a form to send in. However, overall from about 1:15 pm Friday when we left after my class to 5:15 pm Monday when we(my wife's brother driving) got back home, we covered about 2306 miles, about 260 before the contest started, about 510 on the way home on Monday, and about 1536 during the contest. Made a total of about 2650 contacts, with about 100 before the contest, about 400 Monday on the way home, and about 2150 during the contest period. My most ever in this contest in the last 14 years I have been mobile in it. I even got 2 new counties for 4th CW, bringing me down to 10 left. Thanks again everyone, see you on the nets and in other contests."

Pete, **N6HH** was spotted out west running some counties.

Guff, **KS5A** ran over to MS, then ran around over there putting out counties left and right. Then headed back home via many counties in OK.

Ray, **WG6X**, headed to KS/NE putting out counties.

The Dayton Hamvention saw quite a bit of mobile activities as folks headed to and from Dayton. Ed, **K8ZZ**, and Tim, **W8JJ**, ran down from MI. Mike, **KA4RRU**, headed over from VA. Mike, **NF0N**, came to Dayton from Nebraska running along the way.

Other mobiles were out and about in the MARAC test and we'll have some reports later from them in the QSO Party section. .

Don, **K7DM** and Phil, **AB7RW** ran down from the WA/OR area down to CA and back. . Jim, **K0ARS** was over in VA.

KL7HBK, fixed in Second AK, appeared on net frequency a few times (CW).

Larry, **NA7W**, ran a few in ID and WA.

Gene**, WB4KZW,** took a trip to New England running counties up and back.

Art, **N4PJ**, was off on another trip up to TN, KY, IN and more running on 20/30/40M cw.

Bill, **WG9A**, was out and about putting out counties on SSB WI and up to New England.

Jeff, **W9MSE**, headed back home from OH – running on 40/30/20 and 17M. The solar flux is up over 70, so propagation is improving on 17M.

2) MARAC Awards Manager

Randy, AA8R, has been appointed the new MARAC awards chairman. He will be taking over the responsibility from KC5QCB, Janet. There is a tremendous backlog of awards and entering data into the computer database from months and months. Randy is waiting for the computer to be shipped and arrived. No MARAC awards were issued in the past month.

3) N9CHU – Silent Key

Ace, N9CHU, passed away in April, 2009. He was the brother of Rufus, KD4HXM.

4) W9MYY – Silent Key

It was reported by WD9GSU that Walt, W9MYY, is a silent key as of 4/26/2009. He was 90 years old and one of the regular CW ops.

5) NY and KS State QSO Parties

New this year - KS QSO Party now scheduled for August and a NY QSO Party scheduled in October.

http://www.ksqsoparty.org

http://www.rdxa.com

That leaves only 3 states without QSO Parties – AL, IA, and SD.

6) Master Platinum

At this time, at least four more folks have finished up for Master Platinum, including Joyce, N9STL, Darrel, W6TMD, Bob, N8KIE, and Scottie, N4AAT. That should be the first six awards. (K5GE #1 and N4CD #2) Maybe it is time to think about another award to shoot for? Likely within a year or two, another half dozen will reach "Platinum" status and what then? What will keep the mobiles running with incentive to work on new awards?

7) Natural Bingo

Last month we noted that the MARAC Board approved the Natural Bingo award several months ago, and requested that the Awards page be updated to reflect the new award. As of publication date, the Awards page still has the 6/10/2008 last update date. So, while you 'might' be able to be working on Natural Bingo, it seems no one yet has a clue as to exactly what the rules are!

8) Trips page – K3IMC

Don lists how many stars you have on the trips page when you enter a trip. Sometimes it doesn't show all the stars you have. It's easy to fix (and if you don't fix it, it won't get fixed!). Just go to the K3IMC main page (click at the bottom of any page to return to County Hunter Web), then select email directory, then 'edit' your call, and fix the number of stars if you have upgraded in the past few years.

Don has enough on his hands to do, to keep the forum up and running and the other pages, and doesn't update that directory – you need to do it yourself to show things correctly. We all appreciate all he does on the web pages. You have to do some updating yourself.

State QSO Parties

This was another month with lots of QSO parties, staring with FL at the end of April. So many counties, so little time. Most of the QSO parties seem to occur in the spring/fall when there are good driving conditions, and when folks are not off on vacations or when we have the summer doldrums in propagation. Some weekends you have one, some 3 or 4 going on at the same time. Of course, they don't happen on the same days as major contests, like Field Day, Sweepstakes, DX contests or WPX events.

We've included a lot of comments from the 3830 contest reflector from both regulars in the QSO parties, plus participating stations, and from the mobiles if they included comments with their claimed scores. It's interesting to see the problems they encountered, the solutions they came up with, and how they went about the events. For regular county hunters, long trips through dozens of counties is routine, but some of the mobiles and stations participating in these contests – they only get on once a year to 'chase counties' or have fun – or both! Some of them are real fanatical, too, and put in the hours to make thousands of contacts in 24 hours or 36 hours going through 25 or 30 counties! Some are multi-op multi-transmitter operations, going full tilt!

After this month, things slow down quite a bit with just a few QSO parties from now until the fall months. However, there are still ample opportunities in Field Day, the contests coming up, and lots of increased activity as folks travel to the National Convention and take vacation trips all over the country!

A) Florida QSO Party Results

Wow – what can you say about this one, if you had propagation to FL? Even the folks in FL had a fun time Saturday night as 40M was short, and folks in the state worked 50 counties in a few hours! No 80M or VHF in this contest – 40 to 10M only, no WARC. I mannered to work all the counties with OKA (Okaloosa) being the last one from W5WMU. He was

the last county for dozens. It looks like there were many 'clean sweeps' of the 67 counties.

Some wanted 80M for this. I guess it's a two sided coin. If stations and mobiles go and stay on 80M, then the folks further away have no chance if they stay there for working them on 20 and 40 – and both stayed good well into the evening – both for FL stations working each other on 40M, and for those chasing them from all over the country. I've seen lots of QSO parties where nearly 100% of the operation goes to 80M in the evening, and if you are 1000 miles away or 2000 miles away, you are likely out of luck trying to break the pileups. On the other hand, if conditions not good on 40M, it is hard for the in-state stations to work each other if 40M is not short.

Mobiles out and about included: KN4Y, W5WMU, K4OJ, N4KK, AD4Z, N4PN, NO5W, KC4HW, W4AN, K4KG, N4EEB, NN4TO, K9ES, NF4A, K4LQ, W8FNW, N4AO, W4ZW and maybe others! Wow – 15 mobiles keeping things busy and the spots page humming with CW spots. A few SSB spots made, but apparently not too many SSB types chasing the dozens of FL signs on the bands. Or no one spotting to help out the others on SSB.

KO1U: "1st time I worked all mobile/FLQP" (clean sweep!)

W0GXQ: "I needed 33 counties going in and worked 32 of them on Saturday. Only one left was Gadsden and since it was close to Ed's QTH, I decided to lay back on Sunday and try to work some of the folks returning from the Mini. Then today I saw a spot for Gadsden and finished up with KN4Y! The Florida group sure know how to throw a party. And good operators! "

KY0E: "cleaned the slate on FL CW and down to 13 for 4th time. It was a very good weekend. Thank goodness all were on 20m since I couldn't hear a peep on 40m."

WA7JHQ: Great fun. Worked 215 CW Q's with 182 on 20m and 33 on 40m. 66 counties. Missed Okaloosa. Guess there is always next year for a clean sweep."

W8FNW/m (SSB in FL) : "Thanks to all the county hunters on the nets. This was my first state qso party activity. I had a great time giving out counties in the Florida QSO party. Here are the stats: 16.5 hours operation,

850 miles driven, 24 counties given out, 34 states, 6 Canadian stations and 6 DX stations contacted Thanks again for all your help. 73, Jim W8FNW"

From 3830 Reflector

WJ9B(FL) "QRP, for a change; 4.5 Watts measured on a Bird wattmeter!" – he made 358 QSOs!

NF4A/M: "CW – 873Q Phone: 163 Q" – ran all over"

K4KG/M(opK5KG) CW Qs - 2172 Phone Qs = 175

KB1NRB (CT): A few things made this contest notable to me. The first thing is, this was my first ever QSO party, and I loved it. QSO parties are fun! The second thing that made this contest notable to me is that it was the first time I did a cw contest effort without using the computer to help me copy the code. Inspired by the ARRL dx cw contest I put my ears to the wheel and learned the code!!! Now I can play in twice as many contests. The last thing that made this contest notable to me is that I played with an Icom 735 that i picked up for $50 and a 40m wire vertical that i built earlier in the week... To my amazement this wire also worked well on 20m with the help of my LDG z100 a/t.."

N4EEB/m (FL) : "2112 QSO"

AD8J: "Operated portable with an inverted vee for 40 and 20 with the top about 20' above the ground and surrounded by three story condos. This was the same setup that I used the year before but my Q's increased from 481 to 605 and the mults increased from 57 to 68. The secret was "BIC" (Butt in chair)!"

N4PN/m : "Fun times again...thanks to my non-ham friend for again putting up with all of this...probably his swan song as his oldest son starts playing college baseball next year...thanks Jeff!!

No equipment failures....tuner acted up a couple times for some reason.....only a couple of wrong turns along the way....

Started out on Sunday morning in LAK county....after run, looked and there was no icon on the laptop for CT....it was gone!!! As always got my buddy Charlie, NF4A on the phone. He was running Gulf/Franklin counties....and after the run, he ran thru a few click this and click that and I was off to the races again...

Three and half hours back home after the contest....but will do it all again next year, I hope..

ICOM 706MKIIG/AMP - 250w
Hustlers on top of Trailblazer and out trailer hitch...
Logging with CT

Thanks for the Q's...
73, Paul, N4PN
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W4AN/m (K4BAI and KU8E, opr)**:** CW QSO 1777 Phone QSO 94

NO5W: "2300Z Wednesday April 29 - We just got back to Houston an hour ago from our third mobile trip in the Florida QSO Party and in this case the third one definitely had the charm as the results were a personal best for us – and Murphy was no where in sight. My driver, Keri, and I drove over on Friday before the party arriving in Pensacola just in time to join Jay N4OX, his fiancé Christina, Jim KC4HW, and Arnie W4EIP at the bar of the Ruby Tuesday across from our hotel.

We knew from announced plans that the panhandle would be smoking with QSOs on Saturday morning as KC4HW, W4AN, NF4A, and NO5W planned to start from the same or nearby counties mobiling east across the area. The possibility of running into each other seemed obvious but I was surprised when shortly after noon as we headed down US231 and right at the turning point onto SR20 I heard strong clicks from an off-frequency signal. Figuring another station was nearby I looked out the driver's side window and saw W4AN side-by-side with us at the traffic light. We both pulled into

a near by service station for reasons other than fuel and after those duties were taken care of K4BAI, KU8E, Keri and I stopped for an eyeball QSO.

Both groups planned to head east on SR20 until Liberty county where W4AN was to go south and we were to head back north to pickup Gadsden and then I-10 for a long trek to Jacksonville. So to avoid QRMing each other John and Jeff gave us a head start down SR20.

That was the last we saw of the W4AN crew until about half hour after the Saturday session was over when we met them again in Orange Park at -- you guessed it -- Ruby Tuesday. At that point we were also joined by K1TO, K8NZ, E7ZO, and K5KG for lively discussions about how the day went, a few station tours, and a photo-op or two.

Meeting up with other mobiles and members of the FCG has always been one of the big attractions of the FQP for me but of course the main attraction is the tremendous crowd that comes to the party and the possibility of some really good mobile contesting. This year was no different and in fact judging from my results it was the best of the three that I have been involved in with 20M being in excellent shape. Here are some statistics on a county-by-county basis with the first number being the total QSOs in the county and the second number the initial ten-minute hourly rate in the county:

Bay(117/72), Clay(105/138), Franklin(99/162), Gulf(76/120), Wakulla(71/144), Taylor(69/36), Lafayette(64/150), Dixie(63/138), Duval(55/144), Levy(53/192), Putnam(50/60), Gadsden(49/156), Leon(48/156), Baker(47/186), Jefferson(47/150), St.Johns(46/120), Walton(45/78), Alachua(43/114), Gilchrist(43/144), Bradford(42/162), Madison(40/150), Calhoun(40/132), Washington(40/72), Santa Rosa(39/102), Suwannee(37/174), Jackson(32/162), Nassau(32/174), Holmes(30/108), Okaloosa(30/138), Liberty(27/138), Hamilton(26/144), Union(25/30), Columbia(23/120), Escambia(18/90)

Regardless of the above numbers the most exciting and challenging county was Gulf which we hit near the end of our route on Sunday afternoon. Toward the end of Franklin, the county just prior to Gulf, things got somewhat slow and I started getting quite a few questions concerning when I would be in Gulf. It became obvious that quite a few folks needed Gulf. On the first announcement that we had entered Gulf I had a "tiger by the tail" and was living on the edge of chaos. We managed the pileup as best we

could and stopped at a convenient location to make sure we didn't leave any QSOs on the table. I hope that if you were in there we eventually got around to getting you in the log. It was great fun on our end, hopefully also on yours.

In the Single Op + Driver category it should go without saying that the driver is a key contributor to the overall operation. To drive 18-20 hours covering about 1000 miles over two days and to only miss one turn is no mean feat.

Equipment: 2002 Pathfinder
HiQ 4/80 antenna with MFJ 1924 controller
Elecraft K3 remote controller from CQ/X
Navigator USB Interface by US Interface for CAT, WinKey, and GPS Interface
Garmin GPS-18PC DLX GPS receiver
GPS-Enabled Logging Software: CQ/X de NO5W ver 1.7.6
Deka 75 AHr AGM Auxiliary Battery with Super Power Gate charging system
Palm Paddle

73/Chuck/NO5W"

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Ed, **KN4Y**: 1483 QSOs on CW "Great QSO party, great pile ups, DX galore, but no SD or ND"

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B) Nebraska QSO Party

On the air were W0BH/M, K0BLT, N0UNL(WD0BGZ opr) who made 356 QSOs on SSB,

NT2A (From K3IMC Forum) : "This weekend , 04/25-26/09, I worked in both QPs: NE and FL. My goal was to get as many counties in NE as

possible, to take Baker, FL (the last FL county for me). I was not very busy in NEQP, and eventually step by step got involved into FLQP.

FLQP was top organized. There were many mobiles, each on its frequency, high speed CW exchanges and good propagation on 20 and 40 meters with FL all days. During the first day of FLQP I got all FL counties except for GUL and CLR. This erected my interest to continue FL QP on Sunday in order to get the rest two counties. I came across a schedule of mobiles which were going to work in GUL and CLR after 4 pm on Sunday. This information allowed me to relax during the first part of Sunday, and to entertain my wife Lucy, KC2ILN and kids. My final score in FLQP is 278 Qs, and I have worked with all FL counties few times.

NEQP was not that successful. I have worked mostly with W0BH (all 22 counties) and 3 other stations on 20 SSB. I heard K0BLT once on CW, but after few CQ NEQP in the middle of CW FL activity, he returned back to SSB. I also heard one NE, who scan only FL (?). Finally in NEQP I got 47 Qs and 25 counties on 80, 40, and 20 meters. Thank you so much to Bob, W0BH for his NEQP solo trip."

KO1U: "my 14th w0bh/m county at 0247z on 20m cw...Up here 20M good after 0300z."

From the 3830 contest reflector:

W0BH/M: "This year's Nebraska QSO Party run almost didn't happen, but XYL Lorna (K0WHY) was able to drive if we made a one day run, so that's what we did. We headed out to Kearney on Friday evening, then west and north to the Custer / Lincoln / Logan county line for a noon start. The weather was cloudy (so I could easily see the computer screen), cool (which is much better than hot), not windy (which is why I cancelled my Missouri QSO Pary run), and no rain (or blizzard like last year) .. i.e. perfect QSO party weather.

My goal in this QSO party is to visit "new" Nebraska counties and break county records. Each time we cross a county line, scoring and multipliers start over again. We try to stay in the county long enough to capture the record, then move on. Since I'm sharing the airwaves with the Florida QSO Party most of the day, at least one multiplier is pretty much guaranteed!

This year I had lots more action than in the previous two years and the day moved along quickly. Around 7:30 pm, I'd just finished a nice SSB run in Red Willow County near the Kansas / Nebraska border. I told everyone I was moving to CW and did, then made two quick contacts with KM1C and NT2A. I run my IC7000 with the power meter visible, so I immediately noticed my output power barely registering. Conditions were so good that both ops heard me and I figured I'd just switched to the wrong Hustler stack or the tuner hadn't made the switch. A quick check proved both of those guesses incorrect. Since I dropped off the air for no obvious reason, others soon called me. My receive was working fine, but my output power couldn't have been more than a few watts. Seconds turned into minutes as I tried other bands, modes and antennas with the same result. Transmit was almost gone.

As luck would have it, we were just pulling into McCook, one of the very few "larger" towns this trip. We were hungry anyway, so Lorna found a fast food dispensary and went to get us some supper while I did more troubleshooting. Nothing obvious, so I pulled out the backup IC706MkIIG and before Lorna was back with the food had it completely installed with full power out. Icom made both radios very interchangeable except for the faceplate bracket and the remote head cable. I had both remote cables already installed "just in case" and with some extra drilling, was able to mount the 7000 faceplate on top of the 706 faceplate. Removing two screws let me remove the 7000 bracket to reveal the 706 bracket underneath and the rest was easy.

No further equipment problems although I really missed the selectivity of the 7000 in the county line pileups. We were about an hour behind schedule by now and I was planning to skip the detour north to catch Frontier and Gosper counties, but Lorna said "go for it" even though that meant crossing the Kansas border at midnight with a two hour drive home. Lucky we did as you'll see shortly.

Once the Florida QSO Party went QRT at 9:00pm, we had the bands to ourselves and lots of new calls started appearing in my log. I kept trying 80m but noticed a very high noise level and only managed two contacts all evening. I'd planned the route to stay in Nebraska as long a possible, so we were in Nuckolls county with only a short corner of Thayer County left when we stopped on the outskirts of a small town for a quick stretch break.

I noticed a car following us and also appreciated the spotlight as I opened the back of the van to refill my drink mug. The local female constable was quite interested in all the antennas and what we were doing out so late at night (it was after 11:00pm). She soon started smiling as we explained, then warned us about severe storms on our route home.

We'd noticed some lighting far off but decided to put off checking weather radio until we hit the Kansas border ..... which we did about 11:50pm with a two hour drive home. A long but fun day and both of us really appreciate you all riding along. The day wasn't over yet. NOAA weather radio warned us of a severe thunderstorm dropping large hail directly in our path moving northeast with us traveling directly south.

The report was already 15 minutes old and the lightning still seemed far away, so we started heading for home. About 15 miles later most of the lightning was to our east and there was traffic coming up the highway from the south. Suddenly the rain really came down, pea-sized hail started hitting the van and we couldn't see. No where to go, no underpass, so we pulled over and hoped. I've done my share of storm spotting but always with a good idea of where the storm was and helpful hams watching radar to keep me out of trouble. This was different and very uncomfortable, but it was our lucky night.

The hail stopped and we continued. As we went through the town of Belleville mentioned in the NOAA warning, the highway was completely covered with good sized hail for a four or five mile stretch and we were really, really thankful we'd made that half hour detour to the Frontier / Gosper county line. A half hour ago, this would definitely not have been the place to be. We made it home safely at 2:30am.

Stats

We operated 11:20 hours, 773 Qs, 246 unique calls, 2 dupes, 978 miles.

It was fun putting Nebraska on during the "Year of the QSO Party". Lorna and I both enjoy traveling this state and hope to put lots more counties on again next year. We didn't have as many unexpected stops this year because Lorna somehow forgot to bring along her birding binoculars. I suspect that will never happen again since there are some "mystery" birds she's still pondering.

Once again, a BIG thanks to all!

73, Bob/w0bh and Lorna/k0why

PS - The Kansas QSO Party is set for the last weekend in August with lots of plaques, Kansas Konsumable awards, a youth category and of course 105 counties to keep things interesting."

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Then came the **BIG WEEKEND FOR CONTESTS**! (5/2-5/3)

There were 4 contests going on at once – the 7-land QSO Party, the MARAC QSO Party, the IN QSO Party and the New England QSO Party. The spots were coming by the dozens, and after a while, mostly mobiles and new counties to appear showed up on the spots – or newly appearing stations that had not been spotted before, or on 15M or 10M.

It started with the MARAC and 7 land contests starting Friday evening. Norm, W3DYA, Jeff, W9MSE, Larry, W0QE, Van, WC5D, Ed, KN4Y , Scott, KA3QLF, Jim, KB6TAL, Dan, KM9X(ssb) and others were set to put out counties for the QSO Parties. In addition, mobiles in New England and out west in 7 land were set to go.

Larry, W0QE had a bit of an adventure – he ran out through WY, into ID and UT, then back home.

W0QE: "This was a busy weekend. NO thunderstorms or tornadoes as in past years but rain about 75% of the time and some snow.

Today I ran Wasatch, UT followed by Sanpete and then Emery. To get to Sanpete we used a really bad 4WD road. Nevertheless shortly after this we stopped for gas and my vehicle wouldn't start. The ground post to the battery was loose inside the battery (not good). I think all the bouncing around may have caused the battery to come loose and yank on the cables. A jump start and I was back on the road BUT with no battery the alternator noise was really, really bad. I put a 2F capacitor in place of the battery and the roar was

better but still pretty bad and the capacitor got really hot so we wrapped it in a wet towel. Biggest problem was that with no battery I couldn't have the headlights on and run the wipers unless I was running QRP or the radio would reset so the last several counties were put out by multiplexing the windshield wipers and the radio on transmit.

So for those of you who know me picture this. XYL (Beth) was driving, I was sending CW with the computer using my right hand to type, and my left hand was operating the wipers during receive intervals. Beth was laughing so hard she could barely drive. QSO rate went way down but we still had a good time. I will be back again. Thanks for all the Q's."

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7-land QSO Party

3830 comments

NN7ZZ(N5LT OP – Cache UT): 'Another fun 7QP! I spent the entire contest period in the chair except for a
couple short meal and bathroom breaks. I did nothing but run, except for a few S&P Qs while looking for clear frequencies, and used a single radio. Missed HI, AK, and the rare VE mults again, but all the other mults seemed plentiful, and more than enough DX called in to fill the DX mult quota.

Participation seemed to be great again, especially with NEQP and InQP activity. I continue to struggle with logging the county line QSOs. I chose to make a new log entry for each county, which did seem to work, but it broke my run rhythm every time, and the process is always error prone. Thanks to the stations who patiently waited while I interrupted the run and transmitted CW gibberish while getting the logging straightened out, especially after I worked K7VGQ at his four county point in Oregon! "

AA5B (230Q) : "I started the day working guys on 40 cw while watching sunrise over Arizona's Painted Desert and Petrified Forest. How do you top that? Well, I was back there at sunset to finish the show!

In between, I operated from another 4 counties twice each, visiting some areas I'd never seen before. There is some gorgeous scenery in the Coconino National Forest south of Winslow (yes, I did stand on the corner, but saw no girls in flat bed Fords).

Ran an Elecraft K2, a mag-mount Hamstick on 20, and a wire vertical on a fiberglass pole in the trailer hitch on 40. Things worked fairly well, I guess, but QRP mobile can be frustrating at times. Okay, most of the time. "

de N4CD –only spotted once on the spotting site. Guess QRP mobile is really tough with a mag mount hamstick on 20M.

K4XU/m (544Q – 20/40cw): This was a 20 county trip. It rained most of the way and we were plagued by rain static if we went over 60 mph.
Large number of mobiles in both 7QP and the other parties - that's good. We still have more than 30 counties in ID and MT that have never been on in 7QP so there is lots of room for the intrepid mobileer out here.
Thanks to all who found our peanut whistle and my driver, Charlie KI6Y."

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MARAC Counties Contest

Several county hunter mobiles made special trips for this. W3DYA was running in Texas. Van, WC5D, ran in TX and LA. KA3QLF was in PA for a few counties, and Larry W0QE was out in WY, ID, UT, and CO. Ed, KN4Y, was in AL.

WB2ABD: "Lots of action this weekend. Thanks to all participants in all the other QSO parties, and to our dedicated County Hunter mobiles for their wonderful efforts. " - 314 Qs and 221 counties

AA3B: 136Q and 117 counties

KA3QLF: "I am back from my short contest journey. 100W, hamsticks, and a straight key just don't seem to cut the mustard for a mobile contest setup hi. All in all, I ran 4 counties, approx 30 minutes on both 20 and 40 CW. Weather, Family commitments, and fatigue certainly played a part in the

trip. 40M was about a bust in the mobile today, I am wondering if there is not unseen damage to the stick after last Thursday's trip. 4 counties, 5 total qso's. Being a contest situation, I did not do a lot of operating while driving, found some great spots to run, with no noise."

AD1C: 273 QSOs and Counties = 198

W0QE: "Contest observations - After being told that operating the MARAC contest from the west with the big counties was a mistake I didn't listen and went west since I wanted to do also do the 7th area QSO party.

Yes, it was significantly harder to make contacts especially with the mobiles on more than one band and I ran out of people to work in nearly every county (operated from 39 different counties). During the middle of the day on Sunday 40m only netted a fraction of contacts compared to what I worked on Saturday when the 7QP guys were on.

I have found out that while in Wasatch, UT I was spotted incorrectly as Washington, UT so if anyone logged me in Washington you won't be getting an MRC> :) I didn't witness any bad operating behavior which was nice but way too many people used incorrect abbreviations. Also there were several fixed stations near 14050 on Sunday calling CQ CH which made it hard to find a place to run. Without being near the "main" frequency you might not get spotted and every year it seems like fewer and fewer people actually tune their radios. I would beg for contacts and then someone would spot me and an immediate huge pileup would occur. Thanks very much to those who spotted me.

In conclusion I'm not sure where I will go in the future but this was an interesting experience and I enjoyed chatting with all the folks who called me immediately after the end of the contest. The final mileage was 1820 miles and logging with a laptop reduced the logging chores after the contest to only a few hours."

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New England QSO Party

Things were looking good for the NE QSO Party at the N4CD QTH. The whole day had been gloomy and dark with predictions of storms. The S meter sat up at S5-S9 with constant static. The contest started at 2000Z. The first downpour and lightning storm hit at 2015Z. The radio was shut down for a while, while 3-4 inches of rain fell in 10 minutes and water was gushing outside over the tops of gutters, and you couldn't see ten feet. Actually you couldn't even see out of the windows as the wind blew it so hard it was just like a hose sprayed on the window.

Then the rain stopped and the tornado sirens went off. (That happens maybe once or twice a year, so I spent the next half hour watching the TV and listening to the local SKYWARN net on 2M). Nothing happened other than high winds that blew over the Dallas Cowboy's Practice Pavilion. I got back on the air a bit later with 40 over S9 static crashes.

The next set of thunderstorms moved through 3 hours later, so I took another hour break for dinner. Meanwhile, Larry, W0QE was out west and tough to copy in the static in those rare ID counties. Jeff, W9MSE was headed all over NE, and darn, ran my last one in NE on 40m cw during the thunderstorm. Finally, things settled down, and I got busy working stations left and right, but the static decided to stick around much of the weekend as the storms headed east.

Wow! 15 meters was open on Sunday– barely – but I worked half a dozen New England stations – and even worked one on 10M! Most of the action was on 20M and 40M here, and at night, the NE stations disappeared down on 80M. Nantucket and Dukes were spotted along with just about every county in New England. I never heard some of the spotted stations, but that's the way it goes. I just run a R5 vertical and low inverted vees on 30 and 40m. A beam would help, but not going to happen at this QTH!

Mark, KO1U was out and about for a few, along with a half dozen other mobiles, including N1RR, WW1M, WA1Z, K1KI, NE1QP,

Did you work **W1MX/100**? The MIT Radio Club is celebrating it's 100 anniversary of April 30, 1909, by using the callsign W1MX/100 for a two

week period. It was on the air during the NE QP. You can get a special QSL card if you are into collecting them.

From the 3830 Contest Reflector

K1BV: "My personal best score in this contest." 713 QSOs

N1RR/M: "Operating mobile in NEQP is fun and I wanted to be in it, but did not have a current vehicle wired up. So, Friday I wired our Buick. After moving my daughter out of college back home, I tuned up the antennas and started the TEST." (607Qs – not spotted in most counties, though).

WA1Z/m (1202Qs) : "A big thank you to everyone who took the time this weekend to play in the NEQP. From the New England perspective, activity seemed to be near an all-time high. I hope if felt that way from the outside looking in. It seemed I had more "followers" from county-to-county this year than in the past.

My Saturday schedule was thrown out the window before the contest even started. I usually check into my hotel in KENME about an hour before the contest starts and then move into position to begin the contest. I got caught in a RT95 closure about 15 miles south of the hotel for about an hour due to someone flipping their U-Haul truck. I had about an hour's drive from the hotel to where I wanted to start in WALME, but I left the hotel 20 minutes before the contest started. I changed routes and got to WALME as soon as I could, making a few contacts from KENME before getting there.

I decided to venture up to SOMME at the end of the night on Saturday to keep the rate up until the end of the first contest period. Ended up making 45 QSOs on 80 alone from SOMME and continued operating there during the day on Sunday.

On Sunday, it was clear that everyone wanted me to get to this year's Holy Grail, FRAME, as soon as possible. I hope everyone who was looking for FRAME got me.

I went to 15 three or four times on Sunday and only got a short string of callers once when I stopped on top of a hill in SOMME. Never bothered with 10.

Had a 113/hour in the last hour of the contest, which is always fun - even from a car. Broke the 100 QSO barrier in 5 counties. Still need to work on the ergonomics; the operating position is very uncomfortable. "

K1UE (at K1KP in Essex MA) "CW seemed to be a bottomless pit this weekend- it just never stopped. Rate was so good it made operating SSB almost an afterthought; SSB was really only good for the last 7 or 8 mults that were workable. Only mults missed were the Canadians, with PEI being the major miss.

About half the 15M QSOs were QSYs from other bands, as were 2/3 of the 10M Qs. Thanks to all that moved for me. While there were many, many stations worked on 4 bands, a few on 5 bands. Both 10 and 15 were open better than the QSO totals; it seemed that activity on those bands was lacking." (he had 32Qs on 10M and 109 on 15M)

K1EP/M: "The weather turned out to not be a factor, at least where I was driving, which turned out to be about 500 miles. I got a late start because the weather was so nice on Saturday morning, as I stayed at the Nearfest flea market a little longer than anticipated. On Saturday, the plan was to make a counterclockwise loop around eastern and central Massachusetts, starting in Franklin. I got to Franklin by the start of the contest, but unfortunately, I could not find a suitable place to operate until 20 minutes into the contest.

Murphy had started to pay a visit by then. For some inexplicable reason, the first dozen or so QSOs had the time stamp off by an hour and a half. By the time I noticed it, it had corrected itself. Must have been a feature of Windows that I wasn't aware of. Although the location I picked wasn't great, I stayed there for the first hour. I found another location shortly after that and did another half hour there.

The next stop was supposed to be Hampshire, but before I realized it, I was in Hampden. I figured N1BAA was in Hampshire and would give out a lot of the county, so I skipped it. It was there that I discovered that I was having problems with the 12V to the radio. The radio is sensitive to voltage and would shut down if it dropped below 11V. Apparently the powerpole connections that I had, which were several years old, had loosened up enough that there wasn't good contact and the IR drop would

cause the radio to cut out intermittently, sometimes in the middle of a QSO. I thought I had fixed it and decided to press on to the next stop, which was Worcester at a Mass Pike rest stop.

I spent some more time there debugging the problem and when it got worse, I finally gave up for the night, about three or four hours earlier than I had planned. I figured going back home, getting some sleep and attacking the problem in the morning would be a better idea. I ended up with about 150Qs, which wasn't great.

Sunday morning, I redid many of the powerpole connections to the radio and accessories, which greatly improved the situation. I found some of them had worked their way loose and weren't fully inserted in the plastic connector. A good thing to check periodically. I headed out to my first county, the usually rare Suffolk, spending about an hour there and fixing the last of the 12V problems again. I got there early and picked a good location, working RD3A in another contest before the start.

Next stop was Essex, only staying about a half hour there. It seemed that the rate was slowing down a bit and it showed in the next two counties, Rockingham and Strafford, where I only had a total of about 35 Qs. It picked up in York at the I95/Rt1 rest stop. This rest stop links I95 and Route 1, so I got off of I95 to find lunch. I did find a good lunch, but the traffic and slower cars on Route 1 wasted a lot of time getting to Cumberland. It was late afternoon at that point and the rates had picked up.

If I hadn't had so many problems and wasn't so tired, I would have done another couple more counties up in Maine, but decided to head home and finish up the last hour in my home county, Middlesex. Overall, rates were better this year than in previous years. There were times when the meter was over 200 and stayed over 100 for nearly an hour. Most of my activity was on 20 and 40. I tried 15 and didn't hear too much, so I never ventured to 10. 80 would have been fine if I stuck it out Saturday night. But 80 also affects my engine control circuitry and since I had to idle the car to maintain a decent operating voltage, I didn't operate there a lot. I apologize to those when I might have suddenly stopped transmitting in the middle of the Q. At times the radio would cut out and a power reset would set the radio to 5W. There was a time when the signals were loud enough that I kept running at 5W! QRP mobile is not something I would recommend, but it did work for a while. Thanks again for all the Qs

and hope everyone had fun. I hope to fix all those annoying problems by next year."

N1DC (Fixed Norfolk, MA – 630Q)) "Conditions were great on Saturday and more challenging on Sunday. Overall I was very happy with my run rates and worked about 95% of my QSO's via CQ.

I worked N4PN on 5 bands CW and 1 SSB. Worked N4DW, K1GU/4, N4AII and KU8E on 5 bands all CW. Special thanks to KU8E who gave me a heads up on a 10M opening. **This allowed me to pick up 19 stations on what I thought was a dead band. I called CQ there a few times before the heads up with no results. These were my first 10M QSO's in the past 2 years !!**

Lots of comments about good SSB runs by other stations but I didn't experience them. I got a few good signal reports on 20 SSB but only 1 response from 20 minutes of calling CQ. 100W works so much better on CW !"

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INDIANA QSO Party

There were a few mobiles out and about. N9JF, AJ9C, KJ9C, WN9O, N9LF, AE8M/m ran a bunch.

N9JF: "I ran 17 counties on Saturday on INQP and several the night before on the way to Indiana. I enjoyed the operating part and worked several new band counties. What I did NOT enjoy was trying to keep up all the logging while driving and navigating solo."

KM9X: "Well thanks to the county hunters on the nets.. or I would have had no contacts. I ran starting the Indiana QSO Party at noon, and got a total of 4 contacts in 5 hrs of calling CQ, that were not on the CH nets. Other than the rare few Union, Fayette and Rush counties, I got very few on the CH nets after that in the "common" counties. After wasting 3/4 tank of gas I went back home. I never ran the entire route. This was another example of QSO parties being mostly just another CW contest….plain and simple. I always wanted to go mobile for a QSO party. Now I did it, I will never do it again. I

missed a lot of counties I needed for Platinum talking to myself on the "calling freq" for the mobiles.. No one wants a mobile in Indiana, when the 7th area is on, and then the NEQP. I learned my lesson. I'll stay home and work ‘em when I can find ‘em. And no, I am not running a CW contest. Pretty well a big flop day for me. Maybe I need a big station on Nantucket.. that might work.... Dan KM9X”

N4CD: Worked 20 Indiana counties with 14 different stations/mobiles, all but one on CW.

3830 reflector comments

AE8M/M: (224CW 21SSB QSOs)“The number of counties I can cover is limited since I must park to operate, but it sure was fun anyway. Activity seemed very good both inside and outside of Indiana. Thanks to all who called me. Special thanks to WW9R, N8II, W2LHL, NT2A and W9AEM for 4 Q's each and NW6S, K9EN, KG4W, W6GMT, N9HE and N4CD for 3 Q's each.

I used Lakeview Hamsticks with 40M permanently on the roof, and alternated between a 75M (tuned for CW) and 20M hamstick on the trunk lid. The trunk lid mount yielded lousy results. The rig was a K2/100 with the 100W amp and tuner located in the trunk.

I managed to work 5 other Indiana mobiles (KJ9C, AJ9C, WN9O, N9JF and N9LF), but only once each.”

W0BH: “Working 7QP, NEQP and INQP at the same time usually requires a choice, but for the first time this year, I was able to work all three locations on the same bands (20 and 40) at the same time for more than a few minutes. Some short skip on 20m for a good part of the day made that happen into Indiana with big signals also coming in from east and west. This would have been the year to go for Indiana from Kansas!

Since I wasn't concentrating on Indiana, I missed lots of mobile opportunities. I did double my score from last year and worked 47 out of 92 counties overall. Thanks to all for providing some excellent action from Indiana! (27cw and 67 SSB Qs)

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Some claimed scores from IN stations via 3930:

N9N (K9NN, op):	362 CW Q,	619 SSB QSO
WT9U:	202	77
N9FC	133	
W9RE	103	

Most of the out of state stations only worked CW, or had 90% of their contacts on CW. However, as you can see, some of the Indiana stations had lots of SSB QSOs. You also had the opportunity to chase some 1x1 calls, like N9I, N9Q and N9N.

N6KI(CA) : "After spending 15.5 hours on the air and digging for all the INQP stations I could find and only finding 48 Total (and only 8 on CW !!!) - It may be a good idea to consider consolidating all the W9 states into 1 QSO PARTY to assure and motivate out of state contesters to participate - Maybe holding a 9QP on a different weekend than the 7QP and NEQP - 2 VERY popular QSO Parties

73, de N6KI"

de N4CD – busy weekend – and made a few contacts on 10 and 15 meters – my radio still works there! I sent in the logs for the 3 contests and added stickers for all of New Enlgand, the 7th Call Area, and Indiana – now down to 21 to go to have them all! More QSO Parties coming up, and you need to work the 5 states that have no QSO Parties in an ARRL Sponsored Contest like Field Day or Sweepstakes. I'll be hunting for those last. Hawaii will have the last QSO Party of the year. We now take a major break from QSO Parties, but they'll be a few in the next couple of months.

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10-10 CW/Digital Contest

KN4Y (email to N4CD) : "Got home after church and started calling on ten meters. While calling I started putting my MARAC contacts into Writelog using the logging program just for MARAC county hunters. Works great if

you get the exchange correct.

I worked 4 Texas stations, you had a great signal and I was surprised to hear you. Once I got spotted the calls rolled in. Got a VE2, VE3 and a VE4. I did not get a CA which is unusual. After 7.5 hours I had 43 contacts in the log for 72 points, which is good on ten. Got spoiled after running 500-600 in the QSO parties.

Got the Al QP in June, now for the paper work."

De N4CD – just for the heck of it, I checked 10m every now and then. Usually there is absolutely nothing there – but perhaps two locals chatting on 10M SSB, and a lot of computer birdies these days. The first inkling of a band opening was on Saturday when W7CA came in, but faded before we had a good contact. On Sunday, he was back in and we worked. After spotting him, then KN4Y was heard – and lots of pings from others. Then I worked Paul, WB2ABD in NY, and another in FL, a KY station, and another FL station, plus one in NC. Likely E-skip since we had terrific thunderstorms and weather fronts moving across the country – and that generates the E-skip type openings. I'd bet there would have been thousands of contacts if people had bothered to tune their radios to 10M!

Since I am not a member, and only members can submit contest logs….I didn't bother to send in a log for the 10-10 event!

Solar Cycle 24

May 8, 2009: A new active period of Earth-threatening solar storms will be the weakest since 1928 and its peak is still four years away, after a slow start last December, predicts an international panel of experts led by NOAA's Space Weather Prediction Center. Even so, Earth could get hit by a devastating solar storm at any time, with potential damages from the most severe level of storm exceeding $1 trillion. NASA funds the prediction panel.

Solar storms are eruptions of energy and matter that escape from the sun and may head toward Earth, where even a weak storm can damage satellites and power grids, disrupting communications, the electric power supply and GPS. A single strong blast of solar wind can threaten national security, transportation, financial services and other essential functions.

The panel predicts the upcoming **Solar Cycle 24 will peak in May 2013** with a daily sunspot number of 90. If the prediction proves true, Solar Cycle 24 will be the weakest cycle since number 16, which peaked at 78 daily sunspots in 1928, and ninth weakest since the 1750s, when numbered cycles began.

The most common measure of a solar cycle's intensity is the number of sunspots—Earth-sized blotches on the sun marking areas of heightened magnetic activity. The more sunspots there are, the more likely it is that solar storms will occur, but a major storm can occur at any time.

"As with hurricanes, whether a cycle is active or weak refers to the number of storms, but everyone needs to remember it only takes one powerful storm to cause expensive problems," said NOAA scientist Doug Biesecker, who chairs the panel. "The strongest solar storm on record occurred in 1859 during another below-average cycle similar to the one we are predicting."

The 1859 storm shorted out telegraph wires, causing fires in North America and Europe, sent readings of Earth's magnetic field soaring, and produced northern lights so bright that people read newspapers by their light.

A recent report by the National Academy of Sciences found that if a storm that severe occurred today, it could cause $1-2 trillion in damages the first year and require four to ten years for recovery, compared to $80-125 billion that resulted from Hurricane Katrina.

The panel also predicted that the lowest sunspot number between cycles—or solar minimum—occurred in December 2008, marking the end of Cycle 23 and the start of Cycle 24. If the December prediction holds up, at 12 years and seven months Solar Cycle 23 will be the longest since 1823 and the third longest since 1755. Solar cycles span 11 years on average, from minimum to minimum.

An unusually long, deep lull in sunspots led the panel to revise its 2007 prediction that the next cycle of solar storms would start in March 2008 and

peak in late 2011 or mid-2012. The persistence of a quiet sun since the last prediction has led the panel to a consensus that the next cycle will be "moderately weak."

NOAA's Space Weather Prediction Center (SWPC) is the nation's first alert of solar activity and its effects on Earth. The Center's space weather experts issue outlooks for the next 11-year solar cycle and warn of storms occurring on the Sun that could impact Earth. SWPC is also the world warning agency for the International Space Environment Service, a consortium of 12 member nations.

Energy Investment is Plunging

Energy investment is "plunging" because of the recession, paving the way for oil-price surges within three years, the International Energy Agency warned in a new report. The Paris-based watchdog for the world's major energy-consuming nations said **that** in recent months, oil companies and investors have canceled or postponed about $170 billion of investment equivalent to roughly two million barrels a day in future oil supply**.** An additional 4.2 million barrels a day in future oil-supply capacity has been delayed by at least 18 months as companies slash spending. The study will be presented to energy ministers from the Group of Eight industrialized nations this weekend in Rome and to G-8 leaders at a July summit. The report highlights the growing risk that the crude supply -- though currently abundant because of weak global consumption -- could tighten quickly once the world economy gets back on its feet**.** "What we're saying is that come around 2012 the impact of this big recession on oil investment and capacity, if current trends continue, could be severe with much higher oil prices," said IEA chief economist Fatih Birol. The report, which was reviewed by The Wall Street Journal, also notes that most delayed or canceled projects are located in politically stable non-OPEC nations like Canada. Those resources take more years to develop than crude oil found in the members of the OPEC, which is typically easier and cheaper to get out of the ground. **The** IEA estimates oil demand this year will fall by 3%**,** the sharpest drop in about 30 years, to about 83 million barrels a day. The agency said Canada,

with the world's second-biggest proven oil reserves after Saudi Arabia, has been worst hit by falling investment**.** Around 15 Canadian oil-sands projects involving 1.7 million barrels a day in production capacity and $150 billion of investment have been suspended or canceled**.** Oil sands yield a viscous and expensive-to-produce crude. But oil sands usually need at least $55 to $60-a-barrel crude prices to be produced profitably**.** Oil has traded below that level since late last year.

Source: Wall Street Journal

Peak Oil News I

Ethanol Refiners Bought – Cheap

The bankrupt ethanol providers are being bought up for pennies on the dollar – what happens in a bankruptcy court.

“Sunoco Inc. has made the winning bid for a bankrupt New York ethanol plant, giving the Philadelphia oil refiner the chance to join the fast-growing but financially troubled renewable-fuels industry at a fraction of the cost to build a plant from scratch.

Sunoco's bid of $8.5 million was the top bid for the facility on the site of a former Miller brewery near Syracuse, Sunoco spokesman Thomas Golembeski said yesterday. He said it would supply 25 percent of the ethanol Sunoco needs to blend into gasoline to meet renewable-fuels standards.

Sunoco's price is a huge bargain. It cost the developer, Northeast Biofuels L.P., $200 million to build the plant. Construction began in 2006, but it was problem-riddled and never completed, though some production occurred last year. Northeast owes creditors $172 million, according to bankruptcy documents.

Golembeski said Sunoco might have to spend $10 million to $20 million to get the plant to full production of 100 million gallons annually by early next year. He said he did not know how many it would employ. At the time of the bankruptcy filing in January, the plant employed 57, court documents said.

Sunoco is following Valero Energy Corp., the nation's largest oil refiner and owner of refineries in Paulsboro and in Delaware City, into the ethanol sector.

Last month, Valero, based in San Antonio, Texas, bought seven large ethanol plants in the Midwest from bankrupt VeraSun Energy Corp., the nation's second-largest producer of ethanol, for $477 million. That was 30 percent of what it would cost to build the plants, Valero's chief financial officer Mike Ciskowski said in a conference call.

Valero and Sunoco are capitalizing on a collapse in the U.S. ethanol industry, which overexpanded during the energy-price bubble, tripling production from 2003 through last year. That caused the price of corn, the main source of ethanol, to soar, spurring many ethanol producers to sign contracts to protect against even higher prices.

Then the energy bubble burst last summer and the price for a gallon of ethanol swooned from more than $3 to less than $2, squeezing the life from a large number of ethanol producers.

On Monday, four operating subsidiaries of Pacific Ethanol Inc., of Sacramento, Calif., filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, joining at least 10 ethanol producers in Bankruptcy Court, according to MarketWatch.

Golembeski said Sunoco was attracted to the Northeast Biofuels plant in Volney, N.Y., because it was close to Sunoco's main operations in the Northeast.

He said the company hoped to save some money in the shipment of ethanol from the Midwest, where most of the nation's ethanol is made and where corn production is concentrated.

The downside for corn-based ethanol production in the Northeast is that the corn - as much as 40 million bushels a year - will likely have to be shipped to the Syracuse area.

Despite the ethanol industry's problems, demand for the fuel will grow, as dictated by the federal renewable-fuels standard, which calls for an increase from nine billion gallons last year to 36 billion gallons by 2022."

Source: http://www.philly.com/

The Solar Storms of 1959

"At 11:18 AM on the cloudless morning of Thursday, September 1, 1859, 33-year-old Richard Carrington—widely acknowledged to be one of England's foremost solar astronomers—was in his well-appointed private observatory. Just as usual on every sunny day, his telescope was projecting an 11-inch-wide image of the sun on a screen, and Carrington skillfully drew the sunspots he saw

On that morning, he was capturing the likeness of an enormous group of sunspots. Suddenly, before his eyes, two brilliant beads of blinding white light appeared over the sunspots, intensified rapidly, and became kidney-shaped. Realizing that he was witnessing something unprecedented and "being somewhat flurried by the surprise," Carrington later wrote, "I hastily ran to call someone to witness the exhibition with me. On returning within 60 seconds, I was mortified to find that it was already much changed and enfeebled." He and his witness watched the white spots contract to mere pinpoints and disappear.

It was 11:23 AM. Only five minutes had passed.

Just before dawn the next day, skies all over planet Earth erupted in red, green, and purple auroras so brilliant that newspapers could be read as easily as in daylight. Indeed, stunning auroras pulsated even at near tropical latitudes over Cuba, the Bahamas, Jamaica, El Salvador, and Hawaii.

Even more disconcerting, telegraph systems worldwide went haywire. Spark discharges shocked telegraph operators and set the telegraph paper on fire. Even when telegraphers disconnected the batteries powering the lines, aurora-induced electric currents in the wires still allowed messages to be transmitted.

"What Carrington saw was a white-light solar flare—a magnetic explosion on the sun," explains David Hathaway, solar physics team lead at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama.

The explosion produced not only a surge of visible light but also a mammoth cloud of charged particles and detached magnetic loops—a "CME"—and hurled that cloud directly toward Earth. The next morning when the CME arrived, it crashed into Earth's magnetic field, causing the global bubble of magnetism that surrounds our planet to shake and quiver. Researchers call this a "geomagnetic storm." Rapidly moving fields induced enormous electric currents that surged through telegraph lines and disrupted communications."

Source: http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2008/06may_carringtonflare.htm
Authors: Trudy E. Bell & Dr. Tony Phillips | Editor: Dr. Tony Phillips

When telegraph systems were first installed, the folks didn't have any idea about the effect of auroras (and solar storms) on having hundreds of miles of antennas strung up on insulated poles across the country. It came as quite a surprise as telegraph systems suddenly had real problems communicating or even working at all.

The solar storm of 1859 (the Carrington Event) is estimated to be 3 times worse than any storm in the past 300 years – 3 times worse than the 1989 storm that took out much of the power grid in Quebec, which was an exceptionally big storm. That storm was about 589 nano-Teslas in intensity, and the 1859 storm was estimated at 1790 nT. The aurora was seen in Cuba and Hawaii in 1859, and really was incredible across the US and Europe.

Storm of 1859 was the first event recorded by humans from a truly global perspective, not to be repeated until the eruption of Krakatoa in 1883 turned the sunsets red and crimson the world-over. Newspapers such as the New York Times were active in running extensive stories about the 1859 solar storm, and collecting reports from other countries. The great geomagnetic

storm of 1859 is really composed of two closely spaced massive worldwide auroral events. The first event began on August 28th and the second began on September 2nd. It is the storm on September 2nd that results from the Carrington-Hodgson white light flare that occurred on the sun September 1st.

Reports came in from as far south as New Orleans (from the New Orleans Daily Picayune:

"Towards half past eight o'clock a singular phenomenon took place. The horizon from north to north east became of a deep crimson hue, which expanding slowly, made the sky appear as if lighted by a Bengal fire…At first it was supposed that some great conflagration had taken place on the outskirts of the city, but it was soon recognized that no natural firs could produce this particular hue…Crowds of people gathered at the street corners, admiring and commenting upon the singular spectacle. Many took it to be the sign of some great disaster or important event, siting numerous instances when such warnings have been given. Several old women were nearly frightened to death, thinking it announced the end of the world, and immediately took to saying their prayers. A fat old citizen tremblingly stated that this was the avant courier of a dreadful epidemic like cholera of 1833, whilst a French gentleman pooh-poohed, and gravely assured us that this was the well known sign of a revolution in Paris, requesting us to make a note of the date"

From the 1859s journals:

"A magnetic storm from August 28 to September 2 produced widespread effects on the telegraph system in Europe and North America. Mr. O. S. Wood, Superintendent of the Canadian telegraph lines"

"I never, in my experience of fifteen years in the working of telegraph lines, witnessed anything like the extraordinary effect of the aurora borealis, between Quebec and Father's Point, last night. The line was in most perfect order, and well-skilled operators worked incessantly from eight o'clock last evening till one o'clock this morning, to get over, in even a tolerably intelligible form, about four hundred words of the steamer Indian's report for the press; but at the latter hour, so completely were the wires under the

influence of the aurora borealis, that it was found utterly impossible to communicate between the telegraph stations, and the line was closed for the night."

Problems were also reported by telegraph operators in New York, Washington, Philadelphia, Vermont and Massachussetts. Interesting observations were made in France by Bergon and Blavier. Blavier's notes:

"At all the telegraphic stations in France the service was impeded during the whole of September 2, [1859] but especially at two periods of the day, from 4:30 A.M. to 9 A.M., and from noon to 3 P.M. These two periods were the same at all stations, and the greatest disturbances took place exactly at the same hours, at 7 A.M. and at 2 P.M. The longest wires always showed the greatest disturbances. The same day telluric currents were also observed in the greater part of the two hemispheres, in Switzerland, in Germany, in the British Isles, in North America, and throughout Australia."

Many reports from telegraph operators were collected by Silliman and published in the American Journal of Science and Arts, 1860.

Observations made at Boston, Mass., and its vicinity by GEORGE B. PRESCOTT, *Telegraph Superintendent.*

"The effects of the magnetic storm of August 28th, 1859, were apparent upon the wires during a considerable portion of Saturday evening, and during the entire day, Sunday. At 6 P.M. the line to New Bedford (60 miles in length, running a little west of south) could be worked only at intervals, although, of course, no signs of the Aurora Borealis were visible to the eye at that hour. The same was true of the wires running east through the state of Maine as well as those running north to Montreal.

On Friday, September 2d, 1859, upon commencing business at 8 o'clock A.M. it was found that all the wires running out of the office were so strongly affected by the auroral current as to prevent any business being done, except with great difficulty.

Observations made at Philadelphia, communicated by H. EMMONS THAYER, *Telegraph Superintendent*.

On the evening of Aug. 28th, about 8 o'clock, we lost current on all our four wires running from Philadelphia to New York, and we had strong circuit as

if from a near ground connection; but there was no interruption on wires running south to Baltimore and Washington. At 9^h10^m the wires were relieved to a great extent from the influence of the Aurora, giving us our usual working current.

On testing wires at 8 o'clock on the morning of Sept. 2d, I found two of our wires, those running *via* Camden and Amboy to New York, strongly under the influence of an Aurora. The effect was different from that of Aug. 28th. There was an intensity of current which *gave a severe shock* when testing, giving a reversed current, neutralizing our batteries, and destroying magnetism. On removing the batteries, we had a very strong circuit, giving powerful magnetism, but could not raise New York. On the line running from this city to Pittsburgh, the operator, Mr. Steacy, succeeded in transmitting a business message to Pittsburgh *wholly on the auroral current*. The current was changeable, suddenly disappearing and returning at intervals of from five to ten minutes. The signals were distinct and the conversion lasted four or five minutes, the operators exchanging remarks as to the singularity of the phenomenon. At 9. A.M. all the wires were relieved from the effects of the Aurora, and worked as well as usual.

Observations made at Washington, D.C., by FREDERICK W. ROYCE, *Telegraph operator.*

On the evening of Aug. 28th I had great difficulty in working the line to Richmond, Va. It seemed as if there was a storm at Richmond. I therefore abandoned that wire, and tried to work the northern wire, but met with the same difficulty. For five or ten minutes I would have no trouble, then the current would change, and become so weak that it could hardly be felt. It would then gradually change to a 'ground' so strong that I could not lift the magnet. The Aurora disappeared at a little after 10 o'clock, after which we had no difficulty. During the auroral display, I was calling Richmond, and had one hand on the iron plate. Happening to lean towards the sounder, which is against the wall, my forehead grazed a ground wire. Immediately I received a very severe electric shock, which stunned me for an instant. An old man who was sitting facing me, and but a few feet distant, said that he saw a spark of fire jump from my forehead to the sounder.

Observations made at Pittsburgh, Pa., communicated by E.W. CULGAN, *Telegraph manager.*

During the Aurora of Aug. 28th the intensity of the current evolved from it varied very much, being at times no stronger than an ordinary battery, and then suddenly changing the poles of the magnets it would sweep through them, charging them to their utmost capacity, and compelling a cessation of work while it continued.

On the morning of Sept.2d, at my request the Philadelphia operator detached his battery, mine being already off. We then worked with each other at intervals as long as the auroral current continued, which varied from thirty to ninety seconds. During these working intervals we exchanged messages with much satisfaction, and *we worked more steadily when the batteries were off than when they were attached*.

On the night of Aug. 28th the batteries were attached, and on breaking the circuit there were seen not only sparks (that do not appear in the normal condition of a working line) but at intervals regular *streams of fire*, which, had they been permitted to last more than an instant, would certainly have fused the platinum points of the key, and *the helices became so hot* that the hand could not be kept on them. These effects could not have produced by the batteries."

Observations at Christiania, Norway, by Prof. CHRISTOPH HANSTEEN

The effect of this aurora upon the telegraph lines in Norway was much greater than in France and Germany. The effect was noticed from the opening of the stations at 7 A.M. On the 29th communication was interrupted till 11 A.M. on almost all the lines; and likewise Sept. 2d, but with a long repetition after 2 P.M. Sept. 3d, only towards 8-1/2 A.M.

Effect on the telegraph Wires, from the Comptes Rendus, T. XLIX, p. 365

From the evening of Aug. 28th until the morning of the 29th the needles of the magnetic telegraph at Paris were almost constantly in motion, as if a permanent current was passing through the telegraph wires. Business was therefore entirely interrupted, and could not be resumed until 11 A.M. Aug. 29th. The same effect was noticed on the telegraph lines from 4^h to 8^h on the morning of Sept. 2d, although no aurora was noticed on that day. Business was again interrupted, the needles were disturbed, and the bells were rung.

Observations at Brussels by M. Quetelet

About midnight Aug. 28th, the employees in the telegraph office at Brussels noticed signals from their bells, such as often occur during a storm. The employees in the offices at Mons, Antwerp, Gand and Ostend were also awakened by their bells, and enquired what was wanted. Communication with Paris, London, and Berlin were interrupted till 1^h 30^m. Paris and London inquired of our operators if they saw a light in the heavens. The effect ceased at 1^h 30^m on all the lines except the submarine line from Ostend to Dover, which was charged with electricity throughout the entire morning. It was not till 3^h 30^m, and after nearly doubling the battery, that communication was re-established.

September 2, between 5^h and 6^h A.M., there was a second disturbance on all the telegraph lines, and communication between Brussels, Paris, and London was interrupted. "

Source: http://www.spaceweather.gc.ca/se-chr1-eng.php

Of course, today communications go by fiber links most places around the world – but the power grid is now vulnerable as there are millions of miles of insulated wires hundreds of miles long to pick up the large induced currents!

At times, aurora has been seen all the way down to TX and GA – severe storms. Who knows what it might do to a very interconnected 'smart grid' of the future! The storm was caused by a very fast, very large coronal mass ejection that was opposite in polarity to the Earth's magnetic field when it hit.

"In a remarkable 2008 National Academy of Sciences report, "Severe Space Weather Events--Understanding Societal and Economic Impacts Workshop Report", John Kappenman of Metatech Corporation theorizes that a future repeat of the Carrington event or the 1921 geomagnetic storm could result in **catastrophic failure of large portions of the electrical grid that would last for years, costing 1-2 trillion dollars in the first year, and putting million of lives at risk. Full recovery from the event would take 4-10 years."**

When might another Carrington event occur?

"Geomagnetic storms on the scale of the 1859 or 1921 events are very rare,

and no one knows when such an event may recur. Huge geomagnetic storms can occur at any portion of the 11-year sunspot cycle, but are most likely within a year of solar maximum. The 1921 event occurred three years after solar maximum, and the 1859 and 1989 events within a year of solar maximum. According to NASA's Bruce Tsurutani, a massive X22+ solar flare event on April 2, 2001, near the peak of the last solar cycle, was even larger than the flare that triggered the 1859 Carrington event. Fortunately, the 2001 flare was not pointed at the Earth, and we escaped a repeat of the Carrington event."

"Given our history of two geomagnetic storms capable of causing large U.S. blackouts in the past 160 years, the odds of a potentially catastrophic space weather event are probably around 1-2% per year."

Source:
http://www.wunderground.com/blog/JeffMasters/comment.html?entrynum=1206&tstamp=&page=7

Now, what would you do if the electrical power system went down for a year?

If you happen to be stranded on a desert island with internet access, or snowed in for 3 weeks, or just need to kill about a week, here's a full length novel about survival in the US after the US power grid is knocked out. It isn't a pretty story as folks become desperate for food, fuel, housing, and survival. It's 600 pages long, so you won't read it in a day or two.

http://www.giltweasel.com/stuff/LightsOut-Current.pdf

From NAS:

"If a solar flare on the scale of the September 1, 1859 Carrington Event (named after solar astronomer Richard Carrington who observed it from England) were to happen today we would very quickly revert to a much more primitive level of living that would last for months or years. No electricity means no water. No water means death.

According to the NAS report, a severe space weather event in the US could induce ground currents that would knock out 300 key transformers within about 90 seconds, cutting off the power for more than 130 million people.

First to go - immediately for some people - is drinkable water. Anyone living in a high-rise apartment, where water has to be pumped to reach them, would be cut off straight away. For the rest, drinking water will still come through the taps for maybe half a day. With no electricity to pump water from reservoirs, there is no more after that.

There is simply no electrically powered transport: no trains, underground or overground. Our just-in-time culture for delivery networks may represent the pinnacle of efficiency, but it means that supermarket shelves would empty very quickly - delivery trucks could only keep running until their tanks ran out of fuel, and there is no electricity to pump any more from the underground tanks at filling stations.

These transformers normally take a year to build each. More than just these key transformers would be damaged.

The truly shocking finding is that this whole situation would not improve for months, maybe years: melted transformer hubs cannot be repaired, only replaced.”

“The truly shocking finding is that this whole situation would not improve for months, maybe years: melted transformer hubs cannot be repaired, only replaced. "From the surveys I've done, you might have a few spare transformers around, but installing a new one takes a well-trained crew a week or more," says Kappenman. "A major electrical utility might have one suitably trained crew, maybe two."

Within a month, then, the handful of spare transformers would be used up. The rest will have to be built to order, something that can take up to 12 months.

Even when some systems are capable of receiving power again, there is no guarantee there will be any to deliver. Almost all natural gas and fuel pipelines require electricity to operate. Coal-fired power stations usually

keep reserves to last 30 days, but with no transport systems running to bring more fuel, there will be no electricity in the second month."

With no power for heating, cooling or refrigeration systems, people could begin to die within days. There is immediate danger for those who rely on medication. Lose power to New Jersey, for instance, and you have lost a major centre of production of pharmaceuticals for the entire US. Perishable medications such as insulin will soon be in short supply. "In the US alone there are a million people with diabetes," Kappenman says. "Shut down production, distribution and storage and you put all those lives at risk in very short order."

Help is not coming any time soon, either. If it is dark from the eastern seaboard to Chicago, some affected areas are hundreds, maybe thousands of miles away from anyone who might help. And those willing to help are likely to be ill-equipped to deal with the sheer scale of the disaster. "If a Carrington event happened now, it would be like a hurricane Katrina, but 10 times worse," says Paul Kintner, a plasma physicist at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

In reality, it would be much worse than that. Hurricane Katrina's societal and economic impact has been measured at $81 billion to $125 billion. According to the NAS report, the impact of what it terms a "severe geomagnetic storm scenario" could be as high as $2 trillion. And that's just the first year after the storm. The NAS puts the recovery time at four to 10 years. It is questionable whether the US would ever bounce back."

Source: http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg20127001.300-space-storm-alert-90-seconds-from-catastrophe.html?page=1

The good news is that researchers have figured out that events of such magnitude happen about once every five hundred years, on average, and usually only during the peak of the eleven-year solar activity cycle, which is not to occur until 2012 again.

Geomagnetic storms on the scale of the 1859 or 1921 events are very rare, and no one knows when such an event may recur. Huge geomagnetic storms can occur at any portion of the 11-year sunspot cycle, but are most likely within a year of solar maximum. The 1921 event occurred three years after

solar maximum, and the 1859 and 1989 events within a year of solar maximum.According to NASA, a massive X22+ solar flare event on April 2, 2001, near the peak of the last solar cycle, was even larger than the flare that triggered the 1859 Carrington event. Fortunately, the 2001 flare was not pointed at the Earth, and we escaped a repeat of the Carrington event.

Peak Oil News II

Mexico oil exports plummet

Mexican oil exports plunged 18.2% in April to levels unseen since 1990 outside hurricane seasons, in more grim news for a key economic motor relied on for a major chunk of government revenues.

Crude export volumes tumbled to 1.177 million barrels per day as yields at Mexico's aging Cantarell field continued to plummet, state oil monopoly Pemex said today.

Oil production declined 4.2% year-on-year to 2.642 million bpd in April, the fourth month in a row that it has been below a targeted level of 2.7 million bpd, according to a Reuters report.

Oil revenues are a key plank of Mexico's economy and the slide in exports was the latest gloomy data for a country already knocked into recession by a drop in US demand for its factory exports.

Tourism revenues have also been dented this year by the H1N1 flu outbreak.

The government depends on oil earnings to fund more than a third of its budget.

The head of the central bank warned this week that a plan to wean Mexico off of its dependence on oil was urgently needed given the dim prospects for

boosting output in the medium term.

Mexico is a top three oil supplier to the United States but production has declined steadily since 2004 as the country struggles to replace capacity lost at Cantarell.

The United States risks becoming more dependent on less politically stable sources of oil as Mexico's output dwindles.

Cantarell, which was pumping more than 2 million bpd in 2004, yielded only 713,000 bpd in April, down more than 35% from a year ago, according to energy ministry data.

Source: http://investorvillage.com/smbd.asp?mb=4288&mn=30113&pt=msg&mid=7291679

New Award Time?

As of May 2009, six people have finished the requirements for the highest level award offered by MARAC – the Master Platinum Award. People have been diligently working toward this award for the past six years, since February 12, 2003 when the award started. That is now six years since the last and highest level award was created.

In that time, you've seen many of the very active mobiles head all over the country, working 'from' the counties to qualify for their MP award. It takes transmitting from 500 separate counties (a good part of the country) to qualify for the award. In addition, since you can get credit for transmitting from the county toward your own award by working a MG holder, there is incentive to go get those needed counties all over.

In the past issues of the CHNews, readers have read the stories of Gene, K5GE, as he headed to the east coast to run counties, including expensive trips to Nantucket and Dukes, and then to the west coast to finish off getting all 3077 counties. You've read stories of N4CD heading east and west and north repeatedly to get the counties he needed, and to get MP counties for

N9STL and N4AAT and others. You've read about trips by N9STL to get LCs for N4CD and N4AAT getting counties for the folks. The creation of the MP award greatly stimulated mobile activity!

Bob, N8KIE, has gone everywhere - Hawaii – Alaska – and all over the country working on his Master Platinum Award, and naturally, giving out thousands of counties in the process.

In the past year, the only new award voted on (and the rules still have yet to be published) is the Natural Bingo award, unlikely to spur mobiles to head out on vast trips east and west, as they are only good in certain counties. Now, that makes every mobile good somewhere (like N4PJ in Jefferson, IN –most likely). Natural Bingo was conceived by Bill, K2NJ, over 3 years ago, and it took more than 3 years to turn it into an award, and it still isn't in the MARAC Awards Rules page yet!

Now, some complain they will never be able to 'earn' the awards that require mobile operation. Most people will earn their MG (Masters Gold Award) by running counties to get the required 1500 points. However, a few (a very few – maybe 1) have earned it by earning points other ways without claiming points for mobile operations. There are now over 35 people with Master Gold, and it is increasing rapidly. That also makes it easier to work the counties for Master Platinum, naturally.

So how can we keep mobiles out an running? Those who are working on MG need to run counties – but 35 of the most active people have already finished that!

If folks want the mobiles to keep running, there need to be awards to work toward. Within 2 years, they'll likely be another 6 or 8 finished up for MP, and another 10 finished up for MG. What's to keep AB4YZ, W6TMD, N4CD, N9STL, N8KIE, K5GE, and many others out running counties?

Eight people have run all 3077 counties. How many of them are still active and will be still be out running more counties? Lately, of the 8, you hear N7ID, N4CD, and N4AAT. How many of the MP holders (six are finished up – only 2 awarded so far) have been active in the past few months and will continue to be active? Only a few.

There are dozens of MARAC Awards for those who stay at home to work on and earn – everything from Nth time to Bingo N, to the new Natural Bingo, to teams, prefixes, call combos, all CW, and more. There are really only a handful of awards for active mobiles, or require you be an active mobile to get! (well, really only 2 – MP and Ran All USA, since MG can be earned with points you can get by not going mobile).

There have been proposals forwarded to the Awards committee for new awards – Titanium and others, to keep the mobiles running.

Some say, well, not 'everyone' can get them. Duh! Some say it is Unobtainium. True for some. Heck, folks are still working on USACA after 30 years! Not everyone is going to get 5BDXCC, especially if they live in a noisy apartment building with no room for 80M antennas, and folks aren't going to get on the Honor Roll list from the same location, or out mobile likely. Nor are they easily going to get 160M DXCC or on 6M. Maybe they'll never work all counties on 80M or even 40M, or 15 or 10M to qualify for the Marac Five Band Award, or even operate CW or digital to get the 30M Single Band Award. So?

MARAC is the '**mobile**' awards club – to promote mobile activity. It's the name of the Awards Club. It's not the 'sit and home and collect counties' club. It is time for new challenges. The last mobile award was created in 2003 – six years ago…and it took about five years for the first to finish, and now six are done after six years, with more on the way. It is time to create the next level award.

A proposal for Master Titanium was forwarded to the Awards Committee Last July. I've revised it a bit, but the Awards Committee likely can come up with a new challenging award to keep mobiles out and running.

In the July issue of the CHNews:
http://chnewsonline.com/CountyHunterNews-July2008.pdf

"Proposal for New Award to be tentatively called Master Titanium

Discussion – to keep interest in county hunting going, and to provide a path for ever increasing challenges and to keep mobile activity up, the following award is proposed.

In order to make it interesting, a few new twists are proposed.

1) The start date will be after the sixth Master Platinum Award is issued. Whenever date that occurs.

That is for several reasons, the main one being that it will give incentive for ALL the people interested in getting Master Platinum, currently the highest level award, incentive for helping others finish up! That gives more incentive to see the first half dozen MP awards issued to those seeking to be among the first to finish. Second, it keeps mobiles out and running, trying to get things done. And third, it gives no one person the head start for putting out counties for the new award while others are struggling to finish. It gives everyone incentive to get the first six or more folks finished (and others will be close behind).

De N4CD: That has already happened. Six have now finished!

2) To keep mobile activity up, during challenging sunspots and higher gas prices, there is a requirement to transmit from 500 counties. This has not proven a significant challenge to those seeking the MP award, who had to make contacts from 500 separate counties. Only if mobile activity is maintained, will county hunting be alive years from now. There must be incentive to keep up activity. In addition, there must be incentive to work as many people as possible, not just one contact with NC or with a traveling buddy. The counties need to be put out for all to work. Preferably on multiple bands and modes.

Proposed Award:

Master Titanium Award

OBJECTIVE:

1) To make Valid Contacts with Master Platinum Award holders, and

2) Transmitting from at least 500 separate counties after the applicant has earned the Master Platinum Award.

SPECIAL RULES: An applicant must make contacts with holders of the Master Platinum Award in All USA Counties (Master Titanium contacts).

All Valid Contacts for this award must have been made on or after (date to be determined by issuance of Sixth Master Platinum award).

Valid Contacts with Master Platinum Award holders made before the applicant receives the Master Platinum Award are good for the county where the Master Platinum Award holder is located

After the applicant receives the Master Platinum Award, the applicant may receive credit for the county by working another Master Platinum holder from a county, as well as make Valid Contacts with an additional THREE contacts with different operators from each of 500 counties claimed. Club calls cannot be used for the purpose of meeting this requirement. (ie, you cannot work the same person twice or 3 times for 'two' or three contacts using different calls).

AWARD LEVELS: The Master Titanium is awarded for making Master Titanium contacts in All USA Counties and transmitting from at least 500 different counties as a Master Platinum holder, working at least three other operators from each claimed transmitted county.

APPLICATION AND FEES: Standard application and logs. Standard fees apply to members and non members.

_____

There are a few new twists – everything should be a bit different otherwise it is the 'same ole thing' over and over again, like umpteenth time around. Are we ready for a new challenge? Do folks want to keep those mobiles out there running? Making multiple contacts? Giving out the counties?

Note you can get credit for the 500 counties to be transmitted after you get your MP award by working 3 operators from a county. You do not have to work a MP holder to get credit for that part of the award. If you work an MP holder from the county after you get your MP, then you also get credit for the Master Titanium county as well.

What do you think? If you think this is a good idea, tell your director that you are interested in seeing an award like Titanium get created! Now is the time to be working on it, before the first MP awards are issued in the next year or two.

Or are we going to be like the DXCC Honor Roll, where people wait 10 years or longer for a new country to be 'created' so they have something to get excited about?

If you look at the current trips, WG6X is off running 50 or more of his platinum needs. AB4YZ is planning another major trip to get many of his MP needs. See the trend? Once they finish, then what? Little activity from either? Same for the others who finish up? We need another award!

Global Warming?

The research aircraft "Polar 5" today concluded its Arctic expedition in Canada. During the flight, researchers measured the current ice thickness at the North Pole and in areas that have never before been surveyed. The result: The sea-ice in the surveyed areas is apparently thicker than scientists had suspected.

Normally, newly formed ice measures some two meters in thickness after two years. "Here, we measured ice thickness up to four meters," said a spokesperson for Bremerhaven's Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research. At present, this result contradicts the warming of the sea water, according to the scientists.

http://canadafreepress.com/index.php/article/10662

b) Maine - Headline News

All Time Record Cold Maine

Posted *by Tim Kelley* February 10, 2009 at 4:32 pm

Breaking News- NWS and USGS, along with Maine State Climatologist, Verify Data - The National Weather Service confirmed on Tuesday that the low temperature of -50°F (-45.3°C) recorded Jan. 16 at Big Black River in far northern Maine is a new all-time record low for the state. This ties a

previous all-time record low in Vermont for the lowest in the 6 New England states. The NWS statement says:

On the morning of January 16, as New England was under the grip of an arctic blast, an all-time low temperature of -50° Fahrenheit was recorded for Maine. It was recorded at 7:30 a.m. EST at a U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) stream gauge on the Big Black River near Depot Mountain in northwestern Aroostook County. The previous record, -48° Fahrenheit, was set in Van Buren, Maine almost 84 years earlier, on January 19, 1925.

"It is exciting to be a part of this historic event," said George Jacobson, Maine State Climatologist and Member of the State Climate Extremes Committee (SCEC), the group that vetted this measurement for consideration as a new all time minimum temperature record for the State of Maine. "But the real benefit to the State is in good weather and climate data being recorded daily by the NWS, USGS and other partners in the scientific community."

The lowest temperature ever recorded in the U.S. was -80° Fahrenheit on January 23, 1971 at Prospect Creek, Alaska, according the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC). The lowest temperature recorded in the lower 48 states was -70° Fahrenheit on January 20, 1954 at Rogers Pass, Mont. “

The National Weather Service’s first report of what appeared to be a new record low activated a group called the State Climate Extreme Committee, whose members represent state and federal weather agencies. They examined all data pertaining to the reading and called for a testing of the thermistor, an electrical device used in measuring temperatures.

By chance, a monitoring crew that been at the site 10 days before the minus-50 reading checked the device and found it in perfect working order. But before any final decisions were made, a device just like the one at Big Black River had to be tested at 50 below, and it, too, turned out to be on the mark.

“It turned out it was spot on,” said Bob Lent, Maine director of the U.S. Geological Survey, which shares its monitoring sites with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

A vote was taken by the State Climate Extreme Committee, and the final call was made by the National Climatic Data Center, based in Asheville, N.C.

Maine's new record beats the old 48-below mark set in 1925 in Van Buren, also in the northern part of the state. The Jan. 16 low came as part of a blast of arctic air that swept across the state, leaving many other spots in the state shivering in temperatures that were in the double digits below zero.

The record on New Hampshire's Mount Washington, known for its wild weather extremes, is "only" 47 below. Maine has pulled even with Vermont in bragging rights for the region's lowest recorded temperature — 50 below.

Hmmm….global warming??? Not here. Ten record low temps set in Maine the same week.

17M Returns

The solar flux is creeping upwards – now over 70 much of the time – which is good for 17M propagation. Jeff, W9MSE, ran several counties on his trip from OH back to WI, with good signals on 17M. So, don't forget 17M as we head into (hopefully) a new decent sunspot cycle! It may not be a rousing wide open 6M 24 hour a day cycle. Indeed, it may barely get 10M open. That still leaves 17, 15, and 12M to have fun on!

On the Road with N4CD

It was time for the annual trek to the Dayton Hamvention where typically 20,000 hams or so congregate for several days of fun. I seldom seem to get there via the direct route, and this year was no exception. The distance from my house to Dayton is about 860 miles the short way. I did 2990 miles round trip to get there and back the 'county hunter way'.

Joyce, N9STL, was down to THREE for all CW. Imagine that! Starting about five years ago, she ventured on to CW, and now was closing in. Two that she needed were Cannon, TN, and Union, KY, and both could be visited on the way to Dayton. I loaded up the car – took the rain gear – the cold weather gear – the warm weather gear – suntan lotion – gloves and hat. You never know what Dayton weather will be, and you can almost count on rain at least one day on Friday or Saturday. It can snow or be 90 degrees under bright sun. Or in can be a nice 75 degrees with a nice breeze to keep you cool.

So it was up the interstate over to the Nashville area – stopped after 10 hours or so – Motel 6 – about $34, and got to Cannon, TN on Monday morning about noon, and quickly worked Joyce, N9STL, for number 3075. Of course, I was running all the counties along the way to and from the hamfest, about half on cw and half on SSB, or both when time.

Last November, I had encountered snow headed back home from the annual trek to MD while trying to get to Clay and Jackson, TN, so they were next to head for and run. No snow likely in the summer! There were no problems this year with snow, and now TN is done for second time transmit. Then it was up to KY to run across the bottom. I stopped for the night at another Motel 6 in Bowling Green. Next day I headed for Union, KY on Tuesday at about noon. It's fairly close to N9STL's QTH, so you try to pick the best time for propagation for short distance – you're not likely to make it on 40M at 7am or 7pm. Joyce and I worked on 40M, giving her county number 3076, which leaves her only with Lander, NV to finish up. Way to go, Joyce.

It rained – and rained more – the first few days were mostly rain on and off making it less that total fun to be out and about. I was hoping all the rain would get done by the Dayton hamfest. It looked promising.

Now I had 2 days to get to Dayton, so why not wind along the north border of KY through counties that so many needed for one thing or another? WG6X needed a few for MP. Others needed this one or that one. That's what I did, eventually getting over to Robertson, KY, which someone needed for a LC. You can't be in a hurry getting there – the roads are 18 feet wide, no shoulders, and you never go straight for more than 200 feet as you turn the steering wheel from left to right and back constantly. It winds up and down constantly around hills – basically paved wagon paths or cow trails that keep you very busy driving, with average speeds of 25mph getting to and from many of the KY counties. After that county, it was north up into Brown, OH. That evening the sky lit up with thunderstorms – stayed at the Daniel Boone Motel - $43, and in the morning it started to pour down – typical flea market type deluges that seem to occur each year – except it was still Thursday. I decided to head to Dayton and just hunker down. It's no fun county hunting in pouring down rain.

A few hours later I arrived at my budget motel – the nice folks who run the place expect me back every year – and I've been staying there for the last 20 years or so. The main attribute is 'cheap' - $40/night. I ran over to the Air and Space Museum for a few hours on Thursday.

Friday started out fine – no rain – I parked at Salem Mall and caught the shuttle bus to Hara Arena, and entered the flea market at 8am. It was a good day for the flea market, and likely a half million dollar in old stuff changed hands in the first few hours. There were all sorts of old mobile rigs – Multi-Elmacs and Swans and old Heathkits, some Drake things, an Atlas or two, a rare Johnson mobile transmitter, plus a fair sprinkling of IC706s, TS-50s, and newer gear. Quite a bit was priced to move, and did move quickly. It looks like the recession was bringing out lots of gear, and folks wanted to move it quickly. Of course, there were ridiculously priced items that sat there for two days with no sale.

Swan MB-40 and MB-80 Mono-band SSB Solid State Transceivers

You don't see much written about these Swan single band transceivers – solid state. Volume Control – Mic Gain, Audio level and tuning knob. That's it! There were also Swan 120s, 140s, 240s and others for sale as well. I'm not sure why you'd want them, other than for nostalgia, but they were there. Now I take pictures of the old rigs, and let someone else go home with the 'treasures'. Also old Knight Kits, Heathkits, Hallicrafters, Nationals and other vintage gear.

When you also go to Dayton, you can see hundreds of mobile installations – and maybe get some ideas on how to do things.

State of the Art in 1946

The new owner of the Collins 'display van' from 1946 restored and showed it at Dayton. It had a KWM-II transceiver mounted in a 1946 Ford Falcon Van up front. Back in those days, Collins had their full line of equipment mounted in the back of the van in a nice operating position to show it all to customers around the country. The van was taken out of service in the 1980s, and used for other purposes, but purchased by a ham and restored to the same condition as it was in the 1950s era. Now, this is a 'vintage mobile' for sure. A complete S line is in back, along with mobile antennas sprouting from the back and top of the van.

Now, for those on a 'real budget', you can make your own resonators – no need to go out and buy them already built!

K1ANX/m Homebrew resonators on top of mast

Dayton Flea Market on Friday

I wore my feet out, and pigged out on the hamfest expensive food – pizzas and sandwiches and $3 Cokes. Why not? Dayton only occurs once a year. K8MFO had a spot out in the flea market where county hunters could drop on by and rest their feet for a while. No other county hunters seen with a flea market table, but then again, I could have missed them. The flea market spots keep going up and up in price – and fewer and fewer sell. On Friday about half the spots were taken.

Tom, K8YJ

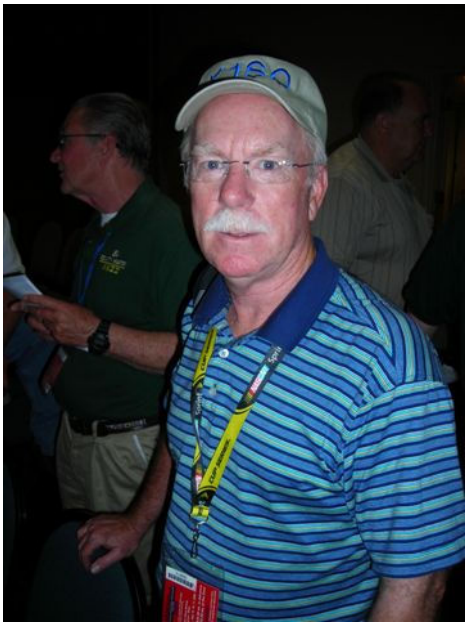
The County Hunter Forum was hosted by Tim, W8JJ. This year, he presented a program on temporary mobile installs. Jeffrey, AF3X, presented a program on using various means, from maps, GPS, on-line computer programs like Google Maps, Street Atlas, and others to help plan your mobile trips. We then had a round of introductions and time for yakking. About 25 then headed over to the Golden Coral for two more hours of telling tall tales about county hunting.

KA4RRU, Mike

At Dayton this year: Jerry, K1SO, Ed, K8ZZ, K8MFO, WD9EJK, W8JJ, N4CD, NF0N, N9JF, K9JF, KA4RRU, WY4D, K4BAI, N4PJ, KA9JAC, N2OO, WA4UNS, NX4W, KB9YVT, K4YT, AA8R, AK8A, KM4FO, KF8UN, KJ8F, N1BY, N4PJ, NO5W, K8YJ, W9KB, K0KY, WY4D, K1SO, AF3X, and more.

K4BAI

On Saturday, I woke up to drizzle outside – no need to rush to the flea market which opened at 8am – but I got ready just in case- and nature cooperated, and the rain stopped right at 8am and the flea market started again. We had a few hours before the rain started on and off again during the day. I bought a few goodies, and wound up heading back to the motel late in the afternoon – the back and feet don't seem to last as long as they did the first time I went to Dayton in 1969 – coming up on 40 years on going there! It's always fun. It's always great to meet people you talk to on the air (or internet these days).



Jerry, K1SO

Art, N4PJ

Sunday it was off headed west to IL to run some counties I had not run a second time – Clay, IL, and Greene, Jersey, and Calhoun IL. A bit time

consuming to get to all of them, but that was done, and I managed to get around St. Louis without too many problems on Sunday. I'm sure on Monday it would have been more of a mess. That night I stopped in St. Francois County, MO, at a Super 8 Motel – dinner nearby at a Country Buffet place. Randy, AA8R, was down to two to go to finish up, and Reynolds, MO was one of them. It's one of those painful to get to counties at the end of a 15 mile little twisting road – but at least the county line is easy to run! Just park on the other side of the road from the sign in the driveway. No traffic either! It's in the middle of nowhere in rural MO.

Reynolds MO CL (Next to LC WBOW for AA8R)

A few friendly dogs, one large and 3 smaller ones, kept me under careful observation the entire time I was there stopped in their driveway. Randy and I hooked up so all he needs is one in WI for the WBOW, and Jeff, W9MSE, said he could get it. I drove out on another road as I was running on SSB – had to go back a quarter mile or so to get a LC for Reynolds after I had just run out of it….then turned around again and headed west on the roads of MO.

There were more counties to get, so it was straight west to get to OK the fastest way possible. Well, that's relative in MO – there are some good roads but lots of smaller ones with towns along them to slow you down a bit. It's also a big state.

Scottie, N4AAT, needed a few in OKLA – Rogers OK for the last for 1x2 calls in OK, Wagoner OK for last WBOW for MP, and Cherokee for LC in OK for CW. Scottie had just worked Bob, N8KIE, to get the last ones he needed in AK, one of them a WBOW for Bingo III, and had saved the last WBOW MP for me. Thanks, Scottie.

Fortunately they were all in the same area, but unfortunately you couldn't run county lines – you had to do separately. It was down quickly to Rogers – then over to Wagoner – then to Cherokee with success in each. I ran them on the various bands as well – having to move off 7056.5 since I haven't worked on the spur problem in the new Malibu that puts S5 noise on 70565.5

N4CD/m Wagoner (and Mayes), OK

Last County WBOW Master Platinum for N4AAT!

Things worked out fine – Scottie got his contacts. Most people found me on 7051.5 plus or minus when I moved there. It was then 4 hours to home. The new car has 5100 miles on it, and less than 3 months old. It gets 32-33 mpg on the road, so it will be a good trip car and other than the spur on 7058 (loud), it is good for noise – essentially none.

Twenty worked well – the DX was in with LY5A, DL3DXX, OK1CF, OK1VD, OK1KT, and occasionally PA3RM, KH6G, KL7D, and others making it through. 30M was a great band once spotted, and 40M probably had most of the activity. The closer to home, the worse 40M seemed to get as you move away from the 'sweet spot' for 40M activity. During the trip to Dayton, N8KIE showed up to run the Second, AK. I heard dozens of 'tu-tu' relays, but never a peep from N8KIE from the mobile, and needed it cw anyway. Quite a few made it through. So now time to do logs and get set for some 'fan mail' (MRCs').

Peak Oil News II

Raymond James` Energy "Stat of the Week"

"Peak Oil in the Rearview Mirror: Why We Think Global Oil Production Peaked Over a Year Ago

With OPEC oil production apparently having peaked in 1Q08, and non-OPEC even earlier in 2007, peak oil on a worldwide basis seems to have taken place in early 2008. Of course, we cannot definitively prove that this marks the all-time peak (that is, that global oil production will never again surpass the 79.3 MMbpd mark). That is something that will only become clear with the benefit of years of hindsight, as was the case with the U.S. in the 1970s. However, it is entirely intuitive to conclude that if both OPEC and non-OPEC production posted declines against the backdrop of $100+ oil - when the obvious economic incentive was to pump

at full blast - those declines had to have come for involuntary reasons such as the inherent geological limits of oil fields. To summarize, we believe that the oil market has already crossed over to the downward-sloping side of Hubbert's Peak. With demand as weak as it is now, of course, inadequate future supply is hardly what the oil market is worrying about these days. Nonetheless, reaching peak oil still represents a transformative moment in the history of the oil market, and, if we're right that this moment is already behind us, it is only a matter of time before prices begin to reflect the reality that oil scarcity may become a fact of life in the not-too-distant future."

Source: Raymond James

Four Corners

"X" does mark the spot!

April 22: "News reports this week that the site of the Four Corners monument was off by a whopping 2 1/2 miles drummed up some concern that anyone who ever got down on their hands and knees to touch four states at once had lived a bit of a lie"

Not to worry, government officials say. The marker is indeed the only place where four U.S. states meet, even though surveyors were a little off when they set the marker in 1875.

The marker is 1,807.14 feet east of where it should have been placed, according to Dave Doyle, chief geodetic surveyor for the National Geodetic Survey, which defines and manages a national coordinate system..

"Where the marker is now is accepted," Doyle said. "Even if it's 10 miles off, once it's adopted by the states, which it has been, the numerical errors are irrelevant. It becomes the legal definition "of the Four Corners."

AP – revised story. Not to worry – it is the boundary of the four states and naturally the four counties around it. “

Source: Washington Post, Apr 23, 2009 - corrected story

Burning Carbon

By Peter Huber

“Like medieval priests, today’s carbon brokers will sell you an indulgence that forgives your carbon sins. It will run you about $500 for 5 tons of forgiveness—about how much the typical American needs every year. Or about $2,000 a year for a typical four-person household. Your broker will spend the money on such things as reducing methane emissions from hog farms in Brazil.

But if you really want to make a difference, you must send a check large enough to forgive the carbon emitted by four poor Brazilian households, too—because they’re not going to do it themselves. To cover all five households, then, send $4,000. And you probably forgot to send in a check last year, and you might forget again in the future, so you’d best make it an even $40,000, to take care of a decade right now. If you decline to write your own check while insisting that to save the world we must ditch the carbon, you are just burdening your already sooty soul with another ton of self-righteous hypocrisy. And you can’t possibly afford what it will cost to forgive that.

If making carbon this personal seems rude, then think globally instead. During the presidential race, Barack Obama was heard to remark that he would bankrupt the coal industry. No one can doubt Washington’s power to bankrupt almost anything—in the United States. But China is adding 100 gigawatts of coal-fired electrical capacity a year. That’s another whole United States’ worth of coal consumption added every three years, with no stopping point in sight. Much of the rest of the developing world is on a similar path.

Cut to the chase. We rich people can't stop the world's 5 billion poor people from burning the couple of trillion tons of cheap carbon that they have within easy reach. We can't even make any durable dent in global emissions—because emissions from the developing world are growing too fast, because the other 80 percent of humanity desperately needs cheap energy, and because we and they are now part of the same global economy. What we can do, if we're foolish enough, is let carbon worries send our jobs and industries to their shores, making them grow even faster, and their carbon emissions faster still."

Ten countries ruled by nasty people control 80 percent of the planet's oil reserves—about 1 trillion barrels, currently worth about $40 trillion. If $40 trillion worth of gold were located where most of the oil is, one could only scoff at any suggestion that we might somehow persuade the nasty people to leave the wealth buried. They can lift most of their oil at a cost well under $10 a barrel. They will drill. They will pump. And they will find buyers. Oil is all they've got.

Poor countries all around the planet are sitting on a second, even bigger source of carbon—almost a trillion tons of cheap, easily accessible coal. They also control most of the planet's third great carbon reservoir—the rain forests and soil. They will keep squeezing the carbon out of cheap coal, and cheap forest, and cheap soil, because that's all they've got. Unless they can find something even cheaper. But they won't—not any time in the foreseeable future

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find something even cheaper. But they won't—not any time in the foreseeable future.

We no longer control the demand for carbon, either. The 5 billion poor—the other 80 percent—are already the main problem, not us. Collectively, they emit 20 percent more greenhouse gas than we do. We burn a lot more carbon individually, but they have a lot more children. Their fecundity has eclipsed our gluttony, and the gap is now widening fast. China, not the United States, is now the planet's largest emitter. Brazil, India, Indonesia, South Africa, and others are in hot pursuit. And these countries have all made it clear that they aren't interested in spending what money they have on low-carb diets. It is idle to argue, as some have done, that global warming can be solved—decades hence—at a cost of 1 to 2 percent of the global economy. Eighty percent of the global population hasn't signed on to pay more than 0 percent.

Accepting this last, self-evident fact, the Kyoto Protocol divides the world into two groups. The roughly 1.2 billion citizens of industrialized countries are expected to reduce their emissions. The other 5 billion—including both China and India, each of which is about as populous as the entire Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development—aren't. These numbers alone guarantee that humanity isn't going to reduce global emissions at any point in the foreseeable future—unless it does it the old-fashioned way, by getting poorer. But the current recession won't last forever, and the long-term trend is clear. Their populations and per-capita emissions are rising far faster than ours could fall under any remotely plausible carbon-reduction scheme.

Various plans have circulated for having the rich pay the poor to stop burning down rain forests and to lower greenhouse-gas emissions from primitive agricultural practices. But taking control of what belongs to someone else ultimately means buying it. Over the long term, we would in effect have to buy up a large fraction of all the world's forests, soil, coal, and oil—and then post guards to make sure that poor people didn't sneak in and grab all the carbon anyway. Buying off people just doesn't fly when they outnumber you four to one.

Might we instead manage to give the world something cheaper than carbon? The moon-shot law of economics says yes, of course we can. If we just put our minds to it, it will happen. Atom bomb, moon landing, ultracheap energy—all it takes is a triumph of political will.

Really? For the very poorest, this would mean beating the price of the free rain forest that they burn down to clear land to plant a subsistence crop. For the slightly less poor, it would mean beating the price of coal used to generate electricity at under 3 cents per kilowatt-hour.

And with one important exception, which we will return to shortly, no carbon-free fuel or technology comes remotely close to being able to do that. Fossil fuels are extremely cheap because geological forces happen to have created large deposits of these dense forms of energy in accessible places. Find a mountain of coal, and you can just shovel gargantuan amounts of energy into the boxcars.

Shoveling wind and sun is much, much harder…. It's often suggested that technology improvements and mass production will sharply lower the cost of wind and solar. But engineers have pursued these technologies for decades, and while costs of some components have fallen, there is no serious prospect of costs plummeting and performance soaring as they have in our laptops and cell phones. When you replace conventional with renewable energy, everything gets bigger, not smaller—and bigger costs more, not less. Even if solar cells themselves were free, solar power would remain very expensive because of the huge structures and support systems required to extract large amounts of electricity from a source so weak that it takes hours to deliver a tan.

This is why the (few) greens ready to accept engineering and economic reality have suddenly emerged as avid proponents of nuclear power. In the aftermath of the Three Mile Island accident—which didn't harm anyone, and wouldn't even have damaged the reactor core if the operators had simply kept their hands off the switches and let the automatic safety systems do their job—ostensibly green antinuclear activists unwittingly boosted U.S. coal consumption by about 400 million tons per year. The United States would be in compliance with the Kyoto Protocol today if we could simply undo their handiwork and conjure back into existence the nuclear plants that were in the pipeline in nuclear power's heyday. Nuclear power is fantastically compact, and—as America's nuclear navy, several commercial U.S. operators, France, Japan, and a handful of other countries have convincingly established—it's both safe and cheap wherever engineers are allowed to get on with it.

But getting on with it briskly is essential, because costs hinge on the huge, up-front capital investment in the power plant. Years of delay between the capital investment and when it starts earning a return are ruinous. Most of the developed world has made nuclear power unaffordable by surrounding it with a regulatory process so sluggish and unpredictable that no one will pour a couple of billion dollars into a new plant, for the good reason that no one knows when (or even if) the investment will be allowed to start making money.

Another argument commonly advanced is that getting over carbon will, nevertheless, be comparatively cheap, because it will get us over oil, too—which will impoverish our enemies and save us a bundle at the Pentagon and the Department of Homeland Security. But uranium aside, the most economical substitute for oil is, in fact, electricity generated with coal. Cheap coal-fired electricity has been, is, and will continue to be a substitute for oil, or a substitute for natural gas, which can in turn substitute for oil. By sharply boosting the cost of coal electricity, the war on carbon will make us more dependent on oil, not less.

To top it all, using electricity generated in large part by coal to power our passenger cars would lower carbon emissions—even in Indiana, which generates 75 percent of its electricity with coal. Big power plants are so much more efficient than the gasoline engines in our cars that a plug-in hybrid car running on electricity supplied by Indiana's current grid still ends up more carbon-frugal than comparable cars burning gasoline in a conventional engine under the hood. Old-guard energy types have been saying this for decades. In a major report released last March, the World Wildlife Fund finally concluded that they were right all along.

But true carbon zealots won't settle for modest reductions in carbon emissions when fat targets beckon. They see coal-fired electricity as the dragon to slay first. Huge, stationary sources can't run or hide, and the cost of doing without them doesn't get rung up in plain view at the gas pump. California, Pennsylvania, and other greener-than-thou states have made flatlining electricity consumption the linchpin of their war on carbon. That is the one certain way to halt the displacement of foreign oil by cheap, domestic electricity.

The oil-coal economics come down to this. Per unit of energy delivered, coal costs about one-fifth as much as oil—but contains one-third more carbon.

High carbon taxes (or tradable permits, or any other economic equivalent) sharply narrow the price gap between oil and the one fuel that can displace it worldwide, here and now. The oil nasties will celebrate the green war on carbon as enthusiastically as the coal industry celebrated the green war on uranium 30 years ago.

The other 5 billion are too poor to deny these economic realities. For them, the price to beat is 3-cent coal-fired electricity. China and India won't trade 3-cent coal for 15-cent wind or 30-cent solar. As for us, if we embrace those economically frivolous alternatives on our own, we will certainly end up doing more harm than good.

By pouring money into anything-but-carbon fuels, we will lower demand for carbon, making it even cheaper for the rest of the world to buy and burn. The rest will use cheaper energy to accelerate their own economic growth. Jobs will go where energy is cheap, just as they go where labor is cheap. Manufacturing and heavy industry require a great deal of energy, and in a global economy, no competitor can survive while paying substantially more for an essential input. The carbon police acknowledge the problem and talk vaguely of using tariffs and such to address it. But carbon is far too deeply embedded in the global economy, and materials, goods, and services move and intermingle far too freely, for the customs agents to track.

Consider your next Google search. As noted in a recent article in *Harper's*, "Google . . . and its rivals now head abroad for cheaper, often dirtier power." Google itself (the "don't be evil" company) is looking to set up one of its electrically voracious server farms at a site in Lithuania, "disingenuously described as being near a hydroelectric dam." But Lithuania's grid is 0.5 percent hydroelectric and 78 percent nuclear. Perhaps the company's next huge farm will be "near" the Three Gorges Dam in China, built to generate over three times as much power as our own Grand Coulee Dam in Washington State. China will be happy to play along, while it quietly plugs another coal plant into its grid a few pylons down the line. All the while, of course, Google will maintain its low-energy headquarters in California, a state that often boasts of the wise regulatory policies—centered, one is told, on efficiency and conservation—that have made it such a frugal energy user. But in fact, sky-high prices have played the key role, curbing internal demand and propelling the flight from California of power plants, heavy industries, chip fabs, server farms, and much else

So the suggestion that we can lift ourselves out of the economic doldrums by spending lavishly on exceptionally expensive new sources of energy is absurd. “Green jobs” means Americans paying other Americans to chase carbon while the rest of the world builds new power plants and factories. And the environmental consequences of outsourcing jobs, industries, and carbon to developing countries are beyond dispute. They use energy far less efficiently than we do, and they remain almost completely oblivious to environmental impacts, just as we were in our own first century of industrialization. A massive transfer of carbon, industry, and jobs from us to them will raise carbon emissions, not lower them.

Thirty years ago, the case against nuclear power was framed as the “Zero-Infinity Dilemma.” The risks of a meltdown might be vanishingly small, but if it happened, the costs would be infinitely large, so we should forget about uranium. Computer models demonstrated that meltdowns were highly unlikely and that the costs of a meltdown, should one occur, would be manageable—but greens scoffed: huge computer models couldn’t be trusted. So we ended up burning much more coal. The software shoe is on the other foot now; the machines that said nukes wouldn’t melt now say that the ice caps will. Warming skeptics scoff in turn, and can quite plausibly argue that a planet is harder to model than a nuclear reactor. But that’s a detail. From a rhetorical perspective, any claim that the infinite, the apocalypse, or the Almighty supports your side of the argument shuts down all further discussion.

To judge by actions rather than words, however, few people and almost no national governments actually believe in the infinite rewards of exorcising carbon from economic life. Kyoto has hurt the anti-carbon mission far more than carbon zealots seem to grasp. It has proved only that with carbon, governments will say and sign anything—and then do less than nothing. The United States should steer well clear of such treaties because they are unenforceable, routinely ignored, and therefore worthless.

If we’re truly worried about carbon, we must instead approach it as if the emissions originated in an annual eruption of Mount Krakatoa. Don’t try to persuade the volcano to sign a treaty promising to stop. Focus instead on what might be done to protect and promote the planet’s carbon sinks—the systems that suck carbon back out of the air and bury it. Green plants currently pump 15 to 20 times as much carbon out of the atmosphere as humanity releases into it—that’s the pump that put all that carbon

underground in the first place, millions of years ago. At present, almost all of that plant-captured carbon is released back into the atmosphere within a year or so by animal consumers. North America, however, is currently sinking almost two-thirds of its carbon emissions back into prairies and forests that were originally leveled in the 1800s but are now recovering. For the next 50 years or so, we should focus on promoting better land use and reforestation worldwide. Beyond that, weather and the oceans naturally sink about one-fifth of total fossil-fuel emissions. We should also investigate large-scale options for accelerating the process of ocean sequestration.

Carbon zealots despise carbon-sinking schemes because, they insist, nobody can be sure that the sunk carbon will stay sunk. Yet everything they propose hinges on the assumption that carbon already sunk by nature in what are now hugely valuable deposits of oil and coal can be kept sunk by treaty and imaginary cheaper-than-carbon alternatives. This, yet again, gets things backward. We certainly know how to improve agriculture to protect soil, and how to grow new trees, and how to maintain existing forests, and we can almost certainly learn how to mummify carbon and bury it back in the earth or the depths of the oceans, in ways that neither man nor nature will disturb. It's keeping nature's black gold sequestered from humanity that's impossible.

If we do need to do something serious about carbon, the sequestration of carbon after it's burned is the one approach that accepts the growth of carbon emissions as an inescapable fact of the twenty-first century. And it's the one approach that the rest of the world can embrace, too, here and now, because it begins with improving land use, which can lead directly and quickly to greater prosperity. If, on the other hand, we persist in building green bridges to nowhere, we will make things worse, not better. Good intentions aren't enough. Turned into ineffectual action, they can cost the earth and accelerate its ruin at the same time.

More Ethanol News

2nd big ethanol plant in Oregon seeks Chapter 11

by Scott Learn, The Oregonian
Thursday May 21, 2009, 7:00 PM

“Five Pacific Ethanol subsidiaries, including one that operates the company's 40-million-gallon Boardman plant, filed for bankruptcy this week, though company officials vowed to keep the Boardman plant operating.

The move by the Sacramento-based company means that both of Oregon's major ethanol plants, recruited through state tax breaks for alternative fuel producers and Oregon's 10 percent ethanol content mandate, are now seeking Chapter 11 reorganizations in bankruptcy court.

Cascade Grain, which briefly operated a plant with a 100-million-gallon annual capacity in Clatskanie, filed for bankruptcy protection in January.

Pacific Ethanol's Boardman plant is the only one of its four corn ethanol plants still operating. The other three plants -- two in California and one in Idaho -- are in "cold shut down" with no current business operations, the company said.

The ethanol industry rushed to expand capacity in recent years, encouraged by federal ethanol content requirements and government subsidies. Pacific Ethanol built three plants in 2007 and 2008, opening the Boardman plant in September 2007 near train tracks ideal for hauling in Midwest corn.

Then the economy plunged, drying up capital and driving down prices for petroleum gasoline. Lower gasoline prices reduced the price refineries would pay for ethanol. That dramatically narrowed the spread between ethanol prices and volatile corn prices, prompting ethanol plant closures nationwide.

Pacific Ethanol, which is publicly held, also reported a $24.7 million loss for the first quarter, with sales down nearly half from the first quarter of 2008. The company's share price, more than $2 last August, is now below 40 cents.

In its bankruptcy filing, the company reported secured debt of $247.3 million, most of it issued to finance plant construction. It also reported several million in money owed to unsecured creditors, including $48,000 to

the Port of Morrow, $257,000 to Iberdrola Renewables of Portland and $84,000 to Northstar Chemical of Portland.

Pacific Ethanol officials declined to comment on the bankruptcy. In a statement filed with the bankruptcy court, Christopher Wright, a Pacific Ethanol vice president, said the company plans to "maintain a business-as-usual atmosphere" during the bankruptcy case and achieve a "successful, rapid reorganization." Pacific Ethanol and its marketing subsidiaries did not file for bankruptcy.

Pacific Ethanol is asking the bankruptcy court to endorse $20 million in new loans, saying it will allow the company to make payroll and maintain relationships with vendors, suppliers and customers.

The move drew protests this week from some lenders, who said they were skeptical that continuing to operate "a money losing plant" will increase the value of underlying collateral.

But Kevin Gross, a U.S. bankruptcy judge in Delaware, approved an initial loan of $7 million this week, scheduling a hearing in June to discuss the rest of the proposed loan package. “

* * * * *

Another one bites the dust. Some oil company will wind up buying it for 5c on the dollar. Your federal and state tax dollars at work – providing useless subsidies for non-productive purposes.

Peak Oil News III

From Roger Wiegand

One thing happening in oil to reinforce prices this year is the rapid depletion of the Mexican Cantarell field, which is expected to go dry by the end of the year. They’ve been providing 10% of the U.S. imported crude oil for our refineries in the Gulf of Mexico. That’s an important event. Another event

on the horizon is the Canadian energy industry is number one in production for the United States, not the Middle East, which a lot of people don't realize. Canada might supply 10% less natural gas and oil to the U.S. this year. Primarily, this is because Canada needs more product for domestic tar sands production expansion and other applications. I think that's an interesting number—10% less. That could have quite an effect.

A lot of Middle Eastern projects went into stop mode or, crash and burn mode. Capital spending was drastically curtailed or, eliminated because they couldn't afford new projects. As rich as Middle Easterners are they've got budgets too; and their new ideas-plans were predicated on $80 oil, not $40 oil. The other consideration during a U.S. review of the last year and a half was when oil prices sold from $147 to $34; several projects would not pencil-out on budgets anymore. So what has happened is a lot of exploration work stopped, drilling was curtailed and many drilling rigs were shut down. Re-pricing and re-budgeting of industry related costs ensued. There will be a large vacuum or dead cycle as far as exploration between when oil prices hit $35 a barrel and when, in fact, they rise to $80 or $90. Companies will not start these new projects until they see an oil price of $60 or $80. Price instability in the energy industry creates exploration volatility in oil, natural gas, coal and unleaded gasoline manufacture. Gasoline's high was $4 and then sold down to $2 or less. Now it's back above $2 again. As new projects take several months and years to develop this plays havoc with long range planning.

Because of this time delay, which should be most of this year, I think you're going to see oil prices not only to $80, but somewhat higher further down the line. Politics is always a substantial and over-riding problem for the energy industry. The Greens are regularly making trouble and delaying projects somewhere. New ideas on carbon trading and carbon trading emissions are ridiculous and roadblock new energy sources creating emergencies on an on-going basis. The latest CAFÉ standards and fuel efficiency rules for the auto industry are projected to cost $100 billion, adding $2,000 to the cost of each car while producing autos so light in weight the highway death toll will rise dramatically. This rule could not come at a worse time for auto manufacturers and contributes to the faster demise of the Big Three.

There's one more thing you need to consider and that is this: overriding everything, we've got the origination of new bonds and cash not only in our

country, but it's a race to the bottom in devaluating currencies worldwide. **I think this will create not only inflation, but potentially hyperinflation. And if we have hyperinflation and we have low oil production and shortages, you can imagine what the prices of oil and gas are going to be. It's going to get very interesting."**

* * * * * * * * *

Gas is at about $2.35 now nationwide average (Memorial Day Weekend). At $80/bbl, it will be over $3. Who knows where it will be in 2-3-4 years?

Go mobile now, while prices are low!

Science News

Five Trillion Watt Lasers? Read all about it!

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/8044620.stm#video

"**When the world's most powerful laser facility flicks the switch on its first full-scale experiments later this month, a tiny star will be born on Earth.**

The National Ignition Facility (NIF) in California aims to demonstrate the feasibility of nuclear fusion, the reaction at the heart of the Sun and a potentially abundant, clean energy source for the planet."

"First and foremost, NIF has been built for national security purposes, to study the conditions that exist in nuclear explosions and the way that nuclear weapons perform.

"That gives you an ability to maintain a credible nuclear deterrent in the absence of underground nuclear testing," said Dr Storm.

"Then, we can study the physics of fusion - can you make a fusion power plant here on our planet? And we can do basic physics and planetary science."

“NIF's 192 lasers will deliver more energy than any facility has ever done, giving scientists an unprecedented glimpse into what are usually distant cosmic processes.

During fusion experiments, the beams briefly focus 500 trillions watts of power - more than the peak electrical generating power of the entire United States - on to a ball-bearing-sized pellet of hydrogen fuel.

Previous generations of experimental facilities were able to create pressures up to a million times that found at sea level on Earth; NIF's lasers will be able to produce pressures up to billions of atmospheres.

"These are conditions that exist inside these super giant planets," Professor Ray Jeanloz, of the University of California, Berkeley, told BBC News.

At these crushing pressures, he said, the conventional understanding of chemistry and the behavior of materials is turned on its head.

"The periodic table that we learn about when we first start chemistry is fundamentally altered at pressures of a million atmospheres," he said.

"By a billion atmospheres, we expect even more dramatic changes."

Lithium – The Big Question

OK…so Obama has basically told you to plan on a future of electric cars, super efficient diesels and hybrids, and a future of less oil. Are we going to switch from one declining resource to one with an even steeper decline curve?

New vehicle emission standards will likely be a boon for everything from aluminum to new plastics, but the producers of lithium -- a mineral used in batteries that power new generation vehicles -- could be the

big winners. While the few public companies that mine lithium will likely see surging revenue, they will also face the pressure that comes with all booms -- making supply meet ever-tightening availability. Companies that mine lithium should see a long-term boost to their business, analysts said, although there are questions about whether there is enough lithium for all customers.

Some energy experts see the irony in lithium batteries replacing carbon-burning gasoline, since they believe exploiting lithium could be just as destructive to the environment as pollution. Lithium is generally mined from rock, but it can also be found in deposits in brine ponds. It comes mostly from one region -- the Andes mountains of Chile, Argentina and Bolivia, with some deposits in China. Chile's SQM is the world's largest producer, along with U.S. specialty chemical companies Rockwood Holdings Inc and FMC Corp.

The auto industry is not likely to bring lithium-powered cars to the wider market much before 2011, although the Mercedes S-class is expected to be the first lithium/hybrid car on the market late this year.

Rockwood, through its German subsidiary, Chemetall, produces lithium from brine lakes at Santiago Salar de Atacama in Chile and from a mine in Silver Peak, Nevada. Chemetall has a 50 percent share of the global market for lithium and 30 percent for lithium carbonate, which is used for battery manufacture. It produced 27,000 tons of lithium last year and is increasing production to about 33,000 tons next year and 40,000 tonnes by 2015. Current global demand is 16,000 tons per year, or 84,000 tons of lithium carbonate.

Analyst David Begleiter, of Deutsche Bank North America, said lithium for use in all kinds of batteries -- auto, laptop and other consumer products -- accounted for about one-third of Rockwood's $3.4 billion revenue last year.

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Ramping up production might be slow because it takes up to 18 months for water to evaporate in brine ponds allowing

the lithium to form.

Not all analysts were uniformly cheery about the outlook for lithium or its major producers. Lithium is not abundant by any means and future resources will be more difficult to exploit. There may be insufficient economically recoverable lithium resources available to sustain electrified vehicle manufacture in the volumes required, based solely on LIon batteries. Depletion rates would exceed current oil depletion rates and switch dependency from one diminishing resource to another. Concentration of supply would create new geopolitical tensions, not reduce them.

Source: Reuters News

N4CD Ramblings

Oil dropped to below $40 a barrel, but is now up 50% to over $60/bbl as driving season hits, and the dollar drops to near record lows against the Euro. It will be mighty expensive to travel to Europe this summer, but cheap for them to come here. Our borrowing binge is causing the dollar to plummet. As the dollar plummets, naturally the price of oil rises since it takes more dollars to buy a barrel of oil. Even worse, the price of oil goes up 4-5x faster than the drop in the dollar. So get set for higher gas prices. Prices usually rise in the summer due to more stringent refining requirements to meet summer pollution goals. Add in the price of a barrel, and we're headed up for a while.

New cars will get better mileage, but at higher initial cost. Many folks may choose to keep their current cars running for another 5 or 10 years, especially if SUVs and light trucks become extinct over the next 10-15 years.

Keep your eye on food exports – many countries are importing massive amounts of food, unable to feed their own populations, while crops are being dedicated to biofuel production. Nearly every ethanol provider has gone

bankrupt, but when you write off 95% of the debt in bankruptcy, and someone can buy the billions in facilities for 5c on the dollar, someone might actually make money on these plants that have received 30 billion or more of your tax payer money in subsidies, and will continue to lift money out of your pocket for the next 20 years in subsidies. What a country!

Motel rates seem to be staying low – many are half empty so traveling isn't too bad, and it is not to bad when you drive 500 miles and only need $30-$35 in gas in the tank (at 33-35 mpg). At this point, there aren't any new awards for mobiles to be working at, so I'll slowly chip away at getting to all 3077 counties a second time – about 300 left to go, but they are all way, way far away from TX. The Master Platinum Award sure triggered lots of travel, and getting N4AAT, N9STL, and others finished up put lots of miles on my car and sent me traveling to 48 states to do it. Now, there is no urgency to go anywhere!

The low price of oil might cause a boomerang effect here in a few years, maybe just two, as soon as economies try to recover, but oil production is way off. You just need to read about Mexico, with output down another 5%, and exports down more than 17%, to realize that soon Mexico will be a basket case of a government no longer able to fund itself. Norway and the UK is also seeing a massive fall off in revenues as the North Sea output drops like a rock. Venezuela, due to Chavez and his commie style takeover of every industry, is also in big decline in production. So it will get very interesting – there isn't much left for him to take over any longer.

So when I'm not chasing counties on CW for the 4th time around, or an occasional SSB county for the County TopList, I've got time to keep up on peak oil. The world is going to be tremendously different in 10-20 years, and I doubt we'll all be driving electric cars by then. Between carbon taxes and the fall off in production, energy is going to start taking a big bite out of your income. We won't be able to build windmills fast enough, and solar only shines during the day – so it will get real interesting as folks have to decide whether to worry about CO2 emissions or keeping the lights on at night.

Taxes? Get set for a real shock. From Paul Farrell:

"Yes, taxes will go up. Must. Why? Debt: federal, state, corporate, bank, pensions, personal. The hole just keeps getting deeper, bigger. Well over

$100 trillion of debt is being piled on future generations, while our GDP is only $15 trillion annually."

Imagine doubling your taxes: That's what David Walker, the former U.S. comptroller general and GAO chief, recently said on CNN: "The federal government has spent more money than it takes in at an increasing rate. Total federal debt almost doubled during President George W. Bush's administration and, as much as we needed some stimulus spending to boost the economy, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office now estimates total debt levels could almost double again over the next eight years based on the budget recently outlined by President Obama," with our "tax bill doubling over time."

Debt is killing the American Dream. We've mortgaged our future, and now Obama's adding a new $1.84 trillion federal deficit. That's four times Bush's record deficit last year, with deficits over $500 billion annually for the next decade. The president's gambling, doubling down, betting the farm, going "all in," with a huge bet that could break the bank

More grim tax facts: A few years ago Peter Orszag, Obama's new budget director, said "balancing the budget would require a 41% cut in spending on Social Security and Medicare, a 47% cut in discretionary spending, or a 17% cut in all non-interest spending." Last week Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner gave us an update: "The longer we wait to address the long-term solvency of Medicare and Social Security, the sooner those challenges will be upon us and the harder the options will be."

Those two trust funds already eat up more than a third of the federal budget and increase $2 trillion a year. Still, AARP lobbyists will fight benefits cuts more than tax increases, despite a new study: Medicare surpluses will run out in 2016, Social Security by 2037, both earlier than previously estimated. Together they account for roughly $80 trillion to $120 trillion in unfunded liabilities, with Medicare 80% of the total ... and please note, America's debt now exceeds the $50 trillion GDP of all economies in the entire world!

Excessive debt virtually guarantees your taxes are going up, way up. The following is why:

1. Federal budget deficits/debt

Federal debt is now $11.5 trillion. Add $1.4 trillion this year. That's almost 100% of GDP. (at that point, our credit rating drops and interest expenses start to climb even more!). The UK is about to lose its Triple A rating. The US might be next.

2. Social Security unfunded debt

No longer a political "third rail," we have no choice: We must raise taxes, or cut benefits. The Ponzi scheme can't keep going on. You know about Ponzi schemes, right? Madoff ring a bell? SS is no different.

3. Medicare unfunded obligations

Unfunded after 2016, $65 trillion by 2041, consuming 100% of tax revenues by 2075. Even worse of a Ponzi scheme! Bernie Madoff a billion times worse.

4. Health care insurance liabilities

Costs rising at double the inflation rate, an alleged 47 million uninsured. (15 million illegals, plus 20 million who could afford to, but don't wish to buy health insurance, plus a few others). Obama plans universal coverage of this mega-$2.5 trillion business. Can we trust insurers sudden offer to help? Who is going to pay for the costs for those alleged 47 million uninsured? Taxpayers, naturally! Who is going to subsidize another 50 million to give them 'premium' health crae? Taxpayers, of course!

5. Military/defense budget costs

Budget $662 billion. Add veterans affairs, Afghan, Iraq: $1.45 trillion 55% of budget. Ouch!

6. Homeland insecurity risks

Ports, chemical plants, borders at risk. Black Swans are lurking; with unpredictable mega-buck consequences. 9-11 was a near half trillion dollar episode.

7. Real estate/mortgage losses

Global real estate from $40 trillion to $70 trillion in 5 years. Total global wealth lost since 2007, $50 trillion. U.S. mortgages shot from $7 trillion to $14 trillion in 8 years, now down $6 trillion, with 20% of homes worth less than the mortgage.

8. Peak oil and energy alternatives

Oil's soon declining. Extraction costs will drive sale price. Nuclear energy cost: $75 trillion. Coal's dirty. Wind, biofuels: costly. Global warming religion will doom existing sources quickly.

9. Cap and trade

Taxing fossil-fuel emissions will increase energy costs. But it won't change much. China won't stop. So population grows, with demand and global warming. Cap and trade is projected to cost the average American family $1500 to $3000 per year! And do nothing but move the emissions and jobs overseas.

10. Foreign trade deficits

Annual deficits continue hovering around $600 billion. Foreigners buy 70% of our debt. Many convert to equity: Today foreigners own a net value of $2.5 trillion in America.

11. Corporate pensions

Two-thirds of them are underfunded. Taxpayers cover losses through the Pension Benefits Guarantee Corporation, also underfunded by $500 billion. More massive bailouts!

12. Local government pensions

Latest estimates of retiree benefits and health-care costs now called a "$2 trillion hole." Regular tax payers are going to pay the gold plated benefits of government workers, state workers and federal workers. They'll be two types of retirees – those scrimping by, and those who worked 'for the government' who will retire early and have inflation protected pensions for life. What happens if CA goes bust? Or NY? Or NYC? Many of those folks retire with $100,000 type pensions at 55 plus health insurance. You'll bail many of them out, while you struggle to get by. They are the unions!

13. Weak U.S. dollar

U.S. foreign debt nearly equals our $15 trillion GDP; China's replacing dollar reserves.

14. Personal savings debt

We're consumers. Our savings rate dropped from 8% in 1980 to zero last year. Only 30% save enough to retire. And yet, economists warn increased savings would slow economic recovery. They want consumption.

15. Credit card and consumer debt

Consumer debt is now at $2.5 trillion. Personal bankruptcies are rising. Still, we're card addicts.

16. Fannie Mae/Freddie Mac

They're owners of $5.5 trillion in mortgage debt, half the nation's total, with foreclosure rates at historic highs.

17. War on drugs

Drug addiction in America plus our misguided, unwinnable supply-side wars on drugs in Mexico, Afghanistan -- all over the globe -- costs hundreds of billions annually. Worse, our domestic demands are increasing the total costs.

18. Shadow banking system

The Fed and Treasury prefer secrecy with loans and credits now over $5 trillion. Auto and insurance companies now getting money. Where was Obama's promise of 'transparency'? Vanished in a heartbeat.

19. Democracy by lobbyists

Forget socialism, capitalism, democracy: America is run by 42,000 lobbyists. It's "Washington's Biggest Business" controlling all politicians.

20. Class gap widening

CEO salaries vs. worker pay rose from 40:1 in 1980 to over 400:1 before the meltdown, while inflation-adjusted pay of workers fell.

21. International credibility

With friends and enemies, our war/torture was costly.

22. What did we miss? Resources, tech, educational, environment, jobs, you pick

New taxes are inevitable at this level of debt. Please, total up each of these individual tax-creating debt areas. And about the coming "tax bomb:" When? How much? Can we stop it? Is this the "last hand" before the "Great Depression 2" in 2011, during Obama's next campaign? Is the president doubling down in a high-stakes poker game, betting the farm, going 'all in,' gambling on your kids/ future, with a bet that will break the Treasury?

Abraham Lincoln struggled to preserve the 'union'. Obama is working to give the country, the corporations, and the governments to the union. California will be a state run by unions, for the benefit of the unions, not the people of California. NY is not far behind.

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Let's put things in perspective. There are about 100 million working folks in the country. A billion dollars debt is 10 dollars per person debt. For a trillion dollar debt, that is one thousand times that, or 10,000 bucks per working person. But we know only half of them actually pay any income

taxes, and many get money back for all sorts of tax credits. So that is $20,000 per tax payer, average. That is per trillion dollars of debt. The current debt is now over 10 trillion and rising. That is $200,000 per working person. But wait…the unfunded liabilities of Social Security and Medicare are going to reach 100 trillion dollars by 2060. That is two million dollars per working person, average, who pays taxes. You got a spare two million dollars to pay in taxes, on average per person? Over your lifetime? Well, just who do you think is going to pay it? There is no money fairy!

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England is a country with national health care. You likely can't find a dentist if you don't have one, and of course, medical care is now rapidly going downhill. But, you get 'nationalized health care'.

From Imprimus

"http://www.hillsdale.edu/news/imprimis.asp

"Once you have government health care, it can be used to justify almost any restraint on freedom: After all, if the state has to cure you, it surely has an interest in preventing you needing treatment in the first place. **That's the argument behind, for example, the creepy teams of government nutritionists currently going door to door in Britain and conducting a 'health audit' of the contents of your refrigerator. They're not yet confiscating your Twinkies; they just want to take a census of how many you have.** So you do all this for the 'free' health care—-and in the end you may not get the 'free' health care anyway. Under Britain's National Health Service, for example, smokers in Manchester have been denied treatment for heart disease, and the obese in Suffolk are refused hip and knee replacements. Patricia Hewitt, the British Health Secretary, says that it's appropriate to decline treatment on the basis of 'lifestyle choices.'"

Don't tell anyone – most of Europe collects 7.5% from your paycheck or pension check for healthcare costs – plus adds a 15 or 19% Value Added Tax on everything you buy, plus a 40% tax on new vehicles in addition to the 15 to 19% value added tax! A 60% sales tax equivalent on your

$30,000 new car. Ready for that? Someone has to fund the health care! It's going to be you!

"Not so long ago in Britain it was proposed that each citizen should have a government-approved travel allowance. If you take one flight a year, you'll pay just the standard amount of tax on the journey. But, if you travel more frequently, if you take a second or third flight, you'll be subject to additional levies—in the interest of saving the planet for Al Gore's polar bear documentaries and that carbon-offset palace he lives in in Tennessee.

Isn't this the very definition of totalitarianism-lite? The Soviets restricted the movement of people through the bureaucratic apparatus of "exit visas." The British are proposing to do it through the bureaucratic apparatus of exit taxes—indeed, the bluntest form of regressive taxation. As with the Communists, the nomenklatura—the Prince of Wales, Al Gore, Madonna—will still be able to jet about hither and yon. What's a 20% surcharge to them? Especially as those for whom vast amounts of air travel are deemed essential—government officials, heads of NGOs, environmental activists—will no doubt be exempted from having to pay the extra amount. But the ghastly masses will have to stay home."

So I guess while times are 'relatively good' for most, it's the time to be out and about county hunting. While you can afford it, and are 'allowed' to do it. The cards are on the table, so I guess its time to figure out what they mean and how it will affect all of us. Bags of potato chips? You're in trouble! County Hunting trips! You're in trouble!

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And the final thoughts of the month from Jeff Rubin with his new book,

"The China-America trade route that expanded rapidly in the late '80s and '90s flooded North America with cheaply produced Asian goods. That helped preserve middle-class lifestyles through an era of stagnant wages, and in many ways became the backbone of North America's economy. But the whole enterprise really works well only when crude is priced at US$25 a barrel. Now that oil is about to move into a new and permanently higher price range, as a result of shortages and a shift to less-efficient production, the lines of trade are about to break down. That is going to throw the Canadian economy first into crisis and then, after a period of adjustment, into a new post-carbon future.

Or so says Jeff Rubin, the brash and controversial (some would say over-opinionated) former chief economist for CIBC World Markets. As he chats about his new book, *Why Your World Is About to Get a Whole Lot Smaller* (Random House, $29.95), Rubin predicts the consumer paradise Canadians have known over the past several years is about to break down — and in a rather messy fashion.

Another round of triple-digit oil prices, Rubin warns, will see a relocalization of manufacturing to Hamilton from Guangdong. Western access to cheap Asian labor will decline as energy prices rise — and that's going to increase the price of basic goods, like food, by as much as 40%. Also in Rubin's crystal ball: $7-a-gallon gasoline in the United States, along with a crash in the greenback that will make driving so expensive that many poorer Americans will realize they can no longer afford it. One-fifth of all cars on the road will be gone in a decade.

Rubin doesn't flinch as he sets forth his vision: "I think the economy of the future is going to be more like the '60s or the '70s.

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If Rubin is right, the world is now going to see the other side of the massive expansion of petroleum supply that over the past 150 years moved us from horses, coal-powered trains and ships to cars, air travel and plastic. As the amount of free-flowing oil begins to decrease, a reversal in that expansion will occur. And other sources of energy simply will not be able to make up the difference.

And so, as the amount of free-flowing light sweet crude decreases, we are increasingly going to move toward more expensive, lower-return fuels. The result will be more resources devoted to primary energy production, which means less free energy for all of the extras — like, say, a radically overbuilt consumer economy that underpins current mall culture.

But there is hope. "The challenge now is growing GDP from that 86 million barrels [a day]," says Rubin. "Peak oil could mean peak GDP. But it doesn't have to if we can de-link economic growth from oil." Manufacturing, he thinks, will move back to Hamilton and Cleveland and the Ruhr; China and America will grow more distant as global trade networks decay. "Your new mantra is: Distance is money," says Rubin. "The entrepreneurs who will do well are those who can pull together local manufacturing networks." He sees

people going back to modes of thought and action that were washed away by cheap oil. We'll repair things rather than throw them away, and that will be good. "We'll see the end of the single globalconsumer," Rubin says. "

Source: http://www.canadianbusiness.com

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We still live in one of the best countries of the world, but we sure are going to have an uphill battle to keep it that way. Your kids and grandkids may wonder where 'the good times' went.

Awards

USCA #1184 WY7LL, Leo, 4/27/2009

No MARAC Awards Issued

Activities for County Hunters

Two QSO Parties in June 2009.

Alabama QSO Party RS(T) and county, state, province, or 'DX'
www.AlabamaQSOParty.org
Jun 6, 1600Z - Jun 7, 0400Z
CW--1.810, 3.545, 7.045, 14.045, 21.045;
PH--1.865, 3.855, 7.230, 14.250, 21.300, 28.4502

West Virginia QSO Party RS(T), WV county or S/P/C
www.qsl.net/wvsarc
Jun 20 1600 to Jun 21 0200Z
CW- up -35
Phone— General 20, kHz from band edge, segments.

ARRL Field Day – June 27 1800Z -28 2100z (this is not a good day to try and run counties – most of county hunters off having fun, and bands full of CQ FD. Join your local club, or go operate category 1C – mobile and make some FD contacts.

That's all for this month. See you next month. Don't forget the National Convention in MI in July!